

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Toolkit

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the development of skills necessary for self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making. These abilities help students become successful adults, establish healthy relationships, and positively impact their community.

This document is designed to provide strategies and tools for incorporating SEL teaching strategies in any Career and Technical Education (CTE) classroom.





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Why is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Important?

Social-emotional learning activities in the classroom help to prime students' minds for learning by reducing anxiety, bringing attention to the task at hand and encouraging positive mindsets. Regular use of SEL activities and strategies in the classroom foster a sense of belonging and safety in the classroom. SEL teaching strategies can help students feel secure to contribute and collaborate with vulnerability and earnestness by ensuring their peers and instructors will treat them with respect and kindness. These practices nurture relationships in the classroom, both between students and teachers. Strong positive relationships with teachers, role models and peers improve the success of students throughout their schooling.

Students who are successful with SEL competencies are more likely to take creative risks, achieve goals, solve problems and take leadership roles. With benefits that will continue once students leave the classroom, these competencies are among the top skills employers look for in the workplace.

Competencies of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Competency	Description
Self-Awareness	Students can communicate personal interests, identify personal strengths and weaknesses, and understand their own emotions and responses.
Self-Management	Students can manage stress, set goals and stay organized. Additionally, students are self-motivated and self-disciplined by working through obstacles and staying focused on their objectives.
Social Awareness	Students are able to adapt to a variety of social situations. They exhibit the ability to empathize with others, identify and react to social cues, express gratitude to others, and care for and about others.
Relationship Skills	Students are able to maintain close relationships and demonstrate conflict resolution skills.
Decision-Making	Students make safe, ethical and appropriate choices that demonstrate care for others and self.

General Teaching Strategies for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Self-Awareness

- Reflection is essential for self-awareness. Provide students with opportunities to reflect on their work, their emotions, and their strengths and weaknesses.
 - **iCEV Insight:** When students turn in projects, ask them to answer a few questions about their work, such as: What did you enjoy about this project? What was challenging about this project? What are you most proud of?
- Have genuine conversations with students to offer observations about their interests and strengths, and how these may impact future academic or career choices.
 - **iCEV Insight:** At the end of an iCEV lesson, ask students to reflect on the assignments from the lesson they felt helped them learn successfully and if there is any topic from the lesson they would like to learn more about. Use project and activity extensions from the lesson for students who enjoyed the topic or assignment and want to learn more, or search for related lessons to add to your course playlist.
- Establish (or allow students to establish) roles based on student strengths or goals. Set standards for allowing students to have open discussions about what success looks like in a role, asking for help and providing feedback to one another. Allow students to see how their behavior and performance impacts the larger group and enable students to reflect on their choices.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Many projects and activities are group projects. Before beginning work on an assignment, have students read through the instructions and brainstorm the roles required to tackle the project successfully. Then have students assign roles within their group based on their interests and skills.

General Teaching Strategies for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Self-Management

- Model self-management for your students. Share goals you set for yourself and ways you motivate yourself. Share your own organizational tips and stress management tools.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Add the following lessons to your iCEV Course Playlists:
 - Goal Setting Basics
 - Skills for Real World Survival
 - Achieving Independence
 - Conflict Management
 - Management of Energy, Money & Tasks
- Assign projects that require effort and time. Help students strategize how to break up large projects into manageable tasks .
 - **iCEV Insight:** Assign iCEV projects which tend to be more rigorous and require several days of work. Before beginning the assignment, have students develop their own personal timeline for completing each step of the project, while considering the other responsibilities they have. Have students regularly compare their plan with their actual progress to determine if they are meeting their goals. Help students who cannot keep up with their plan develop better planning or work management strategies.
- Practice techniques for emotional regulation or mindfulness in the classroom regularly. For example, begin class with three minutes of deep breathing or do calming yoga poses. Provide strategies like grounding exercises for handling stressful situations.
- Establish boundaries for emotionally-charged interactions in your classroom or hallways. For example, when conflict arises between two students ask that they both take a two-minute breather before continuing or ask students to practice mindful reactions to others by thinking their first thought and saying their second.

General Teaching Strategies for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social Awareness

- Ask students to imagine others' feelings and perspectives, particularly when discussing controversial topics.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Use iCEV's Hot Topic lessons to learn more about issues related to your subject area. Have students watch the expert discuss the topic, then have students imagine what different opinions or feelings about the issue and why.
- Demonstrate appreciation for diverse opinions and backgrounds in your classroom. Ask students to share their opinions and perspectives often. Seek out multiple perspectives to share with students.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Add the **Managing Diversity** and **Diversity in the Classroom** lessons to your iCEV Course playlist.
- Develop expectations for social interactions that happen in your classroom, and make sure to share with students when these expectations are not met and what happens to the learning environment.
- Offer opportunities for students to support and learn from one another.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Assign small groups of students segments of a lesson to prepare and teach. Ask students to consider the learning styles of their peers while preparing and presenting the lesson. Instruct students to check in with their classmates to ensure everyone understands the material and offer help for students who may need extra assistance.
- Teach lessons on professionalism and offer opportunities to practice professional communication.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Assign the *Career Connections Activity* found within many iCEV lessons to have students identify skill required in various careers.
- Form small groups or partner students in different ways so students will work with all of their classmates.

General Teaching Strategies for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Relationship Skills

- Set expectations for providing peer feedback using constructive criticism and sensitivity. Help students receive feedback and implement changes from feedback. Offer opportunities for students to practice these skills regularly in different ways (for example, small group, one-on-one, written, verbal).
 - **iCEV Insight:** iCEV projects are good opportunities to encourage students to provide peer feedback. Students can use the grading rubrics included with each project to guide their feedback.
- Build a system for conflict resolution, and assist students when they need to resolve conflict. Provide feedback when students resolve conflict well.
- Model effective listening skills. Encourage students to utilize listening skills during class discussions.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Replace research projects with debates or Socratic seminars to acutely engage listening and speaking skills.
- Assign small group work to offer students opportunities to problem solve and collaborate. Ask students to reflect on how well they performed individually and as a group.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Many activities and projects within iCEV require group or partner work. Use the *Group Work Reflection Activity* (found in the Appendix) as an exit ticket when students turn in work completed in a group.
- Utilize lessons focusing on relationships and collaboration.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Add the following lessons to your iCEV Course Playlists:
 - Leadership & Team Dynamics
 - Teamwork & Collaboration
 - Listening 101
 - Positive Relationships

General Teaching Strategies for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Decision-Making

- Model responsible decision-making and assist students when they are making decisions
- Provide opportunities to discuss how individual decisions may impact friends, family and others.
- Teach decision-making strategies and offer student opportunities to practice.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Use career lessons like **Exploring Careers** or **Connecting to STEM Careers** lessons for students to learn more about careers in their field of interest. Then have students determine what types of decisions they will need to make to prepare for a career.
 - **iCEV Insight:** Add the following lessons to your iCEV Course Playlists:
 - Decision Making
 - Plan for Life
 - Developing a Personal Budget

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Career & Technical Education (CTE)

Social-emotional development also occurs through class service-learning projects. Service learning is learning that occurs as students accomplish objectives to serve the community. The real-life scenarios students work in during service-learning enables SEL skills to flourish. While working on a service-learning project, students develop skills such as reflection, goal setting, relationship building, empathy, teamwork, responsible decision-making and social awareness.



iCEV Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activity Toolkit

Utilize these twelve quick SEL activities as bell ringers, exit tickets or extensions to current iCEV activities and projects. Detailed instruction sheets for each can be found in the Appendix.

Supporting Student Organization

Teachers can utilize class time throughout the instructional period to encourage students to use various organizational habits. When assigning homework or announcing tests and due dates, utilize student organization tips to support your students.

By promoting student organization, students will develop skills in self-awareness and self-management. Utilizing organizational skills, students learn how to be accountable and have efficient time management.

Journaling Prompts

Students will maintain an ongoing personal journal (in a notebook or a running document online). As a bell ringer or exit ticket activity, the teacher will provide one of the writing prompts on the board for students to respond. Allow five to 10 minutes for students to write their response to the prompt. During this time, student should be encouraged to write freely without worrying about spelling or grammar.

Journaling promotes students' self-awareness, as responding to the prompts allows them to recognize and assess their own emotions.

Check-In Circle

Host a weekly check-in circle where students form the same groups and respond to a question. Groups should be diverse so that students are in circles with others they would not normally interact with. Each check in should take three to five minutes.

Using a scheduled check in circle gives students a reliable space to share about their lives. This builds their relationships skills as the students connect with circle members. Check in circles also increases self-awareness and awareness of others while also offering opportunities to develop compassion and empathy.

iCEV Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activity Toolkit

Mindfulness Minute

Set aside three to five minutes before class starts for students to take a moment of mindfulness. This is also beneficial to be used before tests or other high stress scenarios. The more the mindfulness minute is practiced, the better students will become.

This activity allows students to develop their self-management skills as they learn to regulate their emotion and thoughts while they focus attention on the present without worrying about the future or dwelling on the past.

Rose, Bud & Thorn

Use as an exit ticket following an activity or project for students to reflect on successes and challenges.

Opportunity for the students to celebrate and build on their successes while acknowledging challenges which promotes self-awareness as students take the time to accurately recognize their own thoughts and emotions. During this activity, students will also demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.

Future Goals

The first time using this activity, the teacher should spend five minutes teaching students about the importance of making goals and how to set SMART goals. Once students have developed a SMART goal for the week, month, semester, and/or year, have student review their goals every week and track their progress towards accomplishing their goals.

Goal setting enables students to develop self-management skills such as self-motivation, self-discipline, planning, and organizational skills.

iCEV Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activity Toolkit

Acts of Kindness

This quick activity can be repeated as many times as there are students in your class (i.e., if there are 30 students, this activity needs to be performed 30 times). Designate one or two students to be highlighted as the student of the day.

This activity encourages student growth in social awareness and relationship skills. As students practice giving kind statements to their peers, they develop a sense of care for the well-being of others. Students will also develop positive relationships within the classroom.

Team Puzzles

Puzzles are great warm-up activities during the first week of school. They can also be used on a day where students have extra class time after instructional content is met. Each game requires five to 15 minutes depending on the game chosen.

Team games and puzzles build students' relationship skills as they learn to listen communicate and cooperate with a group of diverse individuals. Problem solving within a group of people also promotes how to interact in a positive manner and work with others who have a different perspective.

Group Work Reflection

The group work reflection can be used any time after a group collaborates to complete a task. The reflection serves as an excellent exit ticket following the completion of a project or activity.

Reflection on collaboration promotes a students' self and social awareness, relationship skills as they consider strengths and weaknesses amongst the group. Group reflection also allows students to consider perspectives form others and how they approached the situation. Reflection also encourages development of responsible decision-making as they analyze the situation and determine how it could have been improved. Responsible decision-making as they analyze the situation and determine how it could have been improved.

iCEV Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activity Toolkit

Peer Review

Following a project/activity or as a review before the final version of a project/activity, students will use the peer review to provide feedback on their partner's project/activity. This can be integrated as an exit ticket following the conclusion of the activity or as a bell ringer before students start editing their work.

Peer review enables students to develop a sense of empathy and respect for others while still critiquing work. Providing other students constructive criticism also develops relationship skills as they learn to communicate clearly and offer help where needed.

Name the Feeling

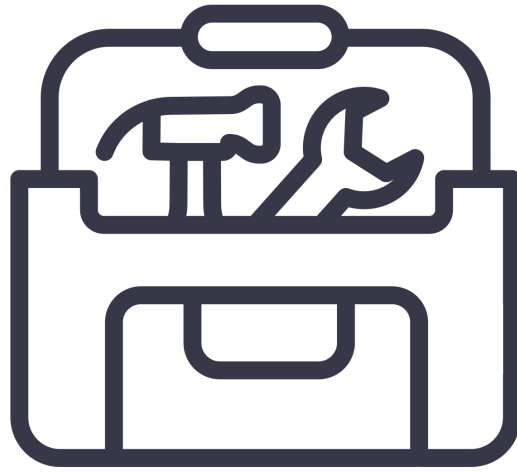
When a student appears to be struggling emotionally or is exhibiting behaviors disruptive to themselves or the group, ask them to use the *Wheel of Emotions Handout* and answer questions like: What am I feeling? Why am I feeling this way? How can I care for myself today?

Labeling emotions improves self-awareness and self-management. This practice allows them to become aware of their own emotional responses and begin to learn how to process and regulate in healthy ways.

Class Cover Letter

Use this activity at the beginning of the year or semester as a way to get to know students and build the teacher-student relationship.

This activity helps the teacher get to know their students early on. As students write their letter, they will work on their self-awareness and self-management by reflecting on their goals and skills. This also exercise demonstrates the need for each student to take ownership of their own learning and classroom environment in your class.



Appendix

Instruction sheets, student handouts or teacher handouts for all activities found in the iCEV Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Toolkit are located on the following pages.



Supporting Student Organization

Taking time to support students with their organizational habits can help them develop skills used across multiple classes.

- At the beginning of class have students make a to-do list
 - can be used as a brain dump to clear their mind
 - can be used as students work on a large project or have a list of unit assignments
 - encourage students to practice making to-do lists in the same space each time
 - model making to-do lists by having a daily or weekly class to-do list on the board, marking off items as they are completed
- Take time to give students a chance to use their planners/agendas when assigning homework, announcing due dates or test dates
 - encourage students to track all of their activities and important dates in one space
 - model how to maintain a calendar by displaying a class calendar with assignments, tests, due dates and breaks noted
- Once a month have students do a ten minutes backpack and binder clean out
 - encourage students to get rid of trash, organize papers and manage odds and ends
 - some student binders may need one-on-one attention to get organized, help students work through the pile of papers to determine the best organizational system
- Once a month, have students organize their Google Drive™ or computer files
 - encourage students to organize files by class and unit

Journaling Prompts

Provide students five to ten minutes to respond to the chosen journal prompt. Ensure the class is quiet and students are writing for the designated time.

- Talk about a difficult decision you had to make. Do you think you made the right choice? Why or why not?
- Discuss a situation where emotions impacted your actions.
- What makes you happy, mad or stressed?
- What historical figure or fictional character do you admire and why?
- Discuss a situation when you needed help.
- What ways do you help others in your family, classroom or community?
- How do you manage stressful situations?
- What characteristics make a good team?
- Describe a time when you felt confident. What contributed to this feeling?
- Write about a time you disagreed with someone.
- Who makes a difference in your life? How do they impact you?
- How do you let people in your life know you care about them?
- Discuss a time when your opinion changed. What caused it to change?
- What are your personal strengths and weaknesses? How can you continue to improve on your weaknesses?
- Describe a time when you felt proud.
- What factors do you consider when making an important decision?
- Talk about a time when you demonstrated leadership. What skills did you use?
- How do you contribute to the school community?
- Discuss one of your current goals and the steps you are taking to achieve it.
- What are some qualities you would want in a friend? What makes someone a good friend?
- Write about someone in your life who you can go to if you are having a problem.
- Describe your personal identity.
- How do you work with someone on a group project who does things differently than you?
- What conflicts have you seen or experienced at school? How could they have been prevented and/or resolved?
- Talk about one of your friends. How are they similar and different from you?
- Describe what you want your life to look like in 20 years.
- What do you like about school? What is challenging?
- Write about a time when you misjudged a person who was different from you. What did you learn?
- Describe the assets you see in yourself, your family, your community and your culture.
- Describe a time when you struggled to give or receive help. What did you learn about yourself?

Check-In Circle

Divide the class into groups of four to six. Students should meet in the same group each time the check-in circle is used. Have all participants sit or stand in a circle facing each other. Each group should determine what their talking stick will be, to ensure all students have the opportunity to share. Students who do not want to share should be allowed to pass the stick on without sharing.

Choose one prompt from the list for the groups to answer and discuss.

- Talk about a high and low point in your life from the past week (month or year).
- What is something you have been struggling with in school this year?
- Share three qualities which best describe you.
- What goals would you like to accomplish this week (month or year)?
- Share your most recent success.
- What is your greatest talent?
- What is something you are looking forward to?
- Describe the last seven days in one word.
- What color represents how you are feeling today?
- Share one thing you are grateful for this week.
- What made you smile today?
- Share one interesting thing you learned recently.
- Who do you admire and why?
- What is something you would like to improve on this week (or month)?
- What do you like best about _____ (holiday or season)?

Mindfulness Minute

Mindfulness is the act of focusing attention to the present moment without dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Practicing mindfulness provides many physical and physiological benefits. Set aside three to five minutes to have students take a moment of mindfulness to refocus their minds. Ensure the room is quiet, then read the prompts below to support your students through the process. The first time students practice mindfulness, they may be fidgety, but the more they practice the better they will be.

Prompts:

- Sit straight up in your chair with your feet flat on the ground and your back against the back of the chair.
- Rest your arms in your lap or hanging down by your side.
- Close your eyes or focus on a still point directly in front of you.
- Take deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. One inhale and exhale is one breath.
- As you breathe, focus on how the breath feels throughout your body.
- Continue to breathe in and out slowly until you complete ten counts of breath.
- If your mind wanders and you start thinking about other things, start counting from one again.
- After completing ten breaths, open your eyes and consider how you feel.

Rose, Bud & Thorn

Activity Overview:

You will reflect on your work from a recent activity or project and identify your successes and challenges.

Directions:

1. Consider how you progressed through the activity/project.
2. Identify a success, positive outcome or highlight of the activity/project in the rose section.
3. Identify a challenge, difficult or stressful part of the activity/project in the thorn section.
4. Identify a new idea, area of growth or something you are looking forward to in the bud section.

ROSE: Highlight, success or positive take away



BUD: New idea, area of growth or something to look forward to



THORN: Challenge, source of stress or difficulty



Future Goals

Activity Overview:

You will create a SMART goal you would like to accomplish and track your progress towards accomplishing the goal.

Directions:

1. Write a SMART goal you would like to accomplish.
2. Establish a deadline for your goal to be completed.
3. Identify three to five supporting tasks needed to complete the goal.
4. Note any anticipated obstacles you may face and the actions you will take to overcome them.
5. During each goal check-in, document the date.

SMART Goal:

Deadline:

Supporting Tasks:

Anticipated Obstacles:

Acts of Kindness

Use one of the following sentence starters to write your act of kindness for the selected student(s).

Kindness Statement Prompts:

- One way you have inspired me...
- I appreciate the time you helped me by....
- You helped me be a better person by...
- I know I can count on you for...
- I appreciate when you....
- I look forward to seeing you because...
- I am impressed by....
- Thank you for.....
- I like when you...
- Three words I think of when I think of you are....

Team Puzzles

Use these activities at the beginning of the school year or semester to encourage students to warm-up to each other. After each puzzle, take time to have students reflect on what skills they used to make them successful.

Human Knot:

Divide the class into groups of 10 to 12 students. Instruct each group to stand in a small circle, shoulder to shoulder. Tell everyone to place their right hand in the middle of the circle and grab someone else's hand. Have them repeat with their left hand. Ensure everyone is holding a different person's left and right hand. Once groups are ready, instruct students to untangle themselves without letting their hands go.

Silent Birthday Order:

Instruct students this is a silent activity. They must line themselves up into a line based on birthday. January 1 will be at the front of the line and December 31 will be at the opposite end, year does not matter for the line order.

Seeing Spots:

Place a different color sticker or dot on each student's forehead so they do not know what color it is. Instruct students they must be silent and form a "team" of students with the same color sticker.

Flip the Sheet/Tarp:

Divide students into groups of 10 to 12. Have each group stand on top of their own flat bed sheet, tarp or blanket. Challenge the groups to flip over the sheet/tarp/blanket without anybody stepping off or touching the ground.

Marshmallow-Toothpick Structure:

Divide the class into groups of four or five. Pass out an equal number of marshmallows and toothpicks to each group. Instruct the groups to work together to build the tallest structure in a set amount of time. Only one student at a time may work on the structure, use a bell or clap when the students need to rotate workers.

Hula Hoop Pass:

Divide the class into two groups. Each group should form a circle and hold hands. Give one person in each group a hula hoop to place their arm through then relink with the circle. Each group will race to pass the hula hoop around the circle without unclasping hands.

No Hands Cup Stacking:

Divide students into groups of four or fives. Each group should be provided with six disposable cups and a rubber band with five long strings tied to it. Challenge the students to build a cup pyramid without touching the cups. Students will use the strings around the rubber band to make the rubber band expand and contract to pick up the cups.

Group Work Reflection

Activity Overview:

You will collaborate with peers on an activity or project, then reflect on how your group worked together.

Directions:

1. Read each group work descriptor and consider how you contributed to the group's dynamic.
2. Rate each area on a scale of one to five, using the scale below.
 1. I did not demonstrated this at all.
 2. I demonstrated this in the minimum possible way.
 3. I demonstrated this at an equal level as my group members.
 4. I excelled in this area.
 5. I am a role model in this area.
3. Identify a plan for improvement the next time you work in a group.

Area	Score	Evidence/Example
Communication: I was an active listener when others were talking and shared my thoughts and ideas in a clear manner.		
Cooperation: During conflict, I tried to understand other's perspective and worked towards a compromise.		
Support: I contributed to a positive work environment where other group members felt welcome and comfortable.		
Focus: I came to class prepared to work, stayed on task during group work and did not cause any distractions.		
Contribution: I offered suggestions to the group and asked questions when I did not understand something.		
Plan for Improvement: 		

Peer Review

Activity Overview:

You will review a peer's work and provide feedback on how they can improve and areas in which they excelled.

Directions:

1. Review the rubric.
2. Exchange assignments with a partner. Review their work and complete the feedback form with strengths and suggestions for improvement in each area.
3. Since your feedback will be reviewed by your partner, review the tips below in how to provide helpful feedback.
 - Be specific and use examples
 - Use professional language
 - Critique the work, not the person

	Strengths	Suggestions
Content: Is the information included adequate?		
Writing Style: Is the information clear and cohesive?		
Grammar: Are there spelling or grammatical errors?		
Organization: Is the material logical and easy to follow?		
Visual Appeal: Is the material attractive and interesting?		
Citation: Are sources adequately cited?		

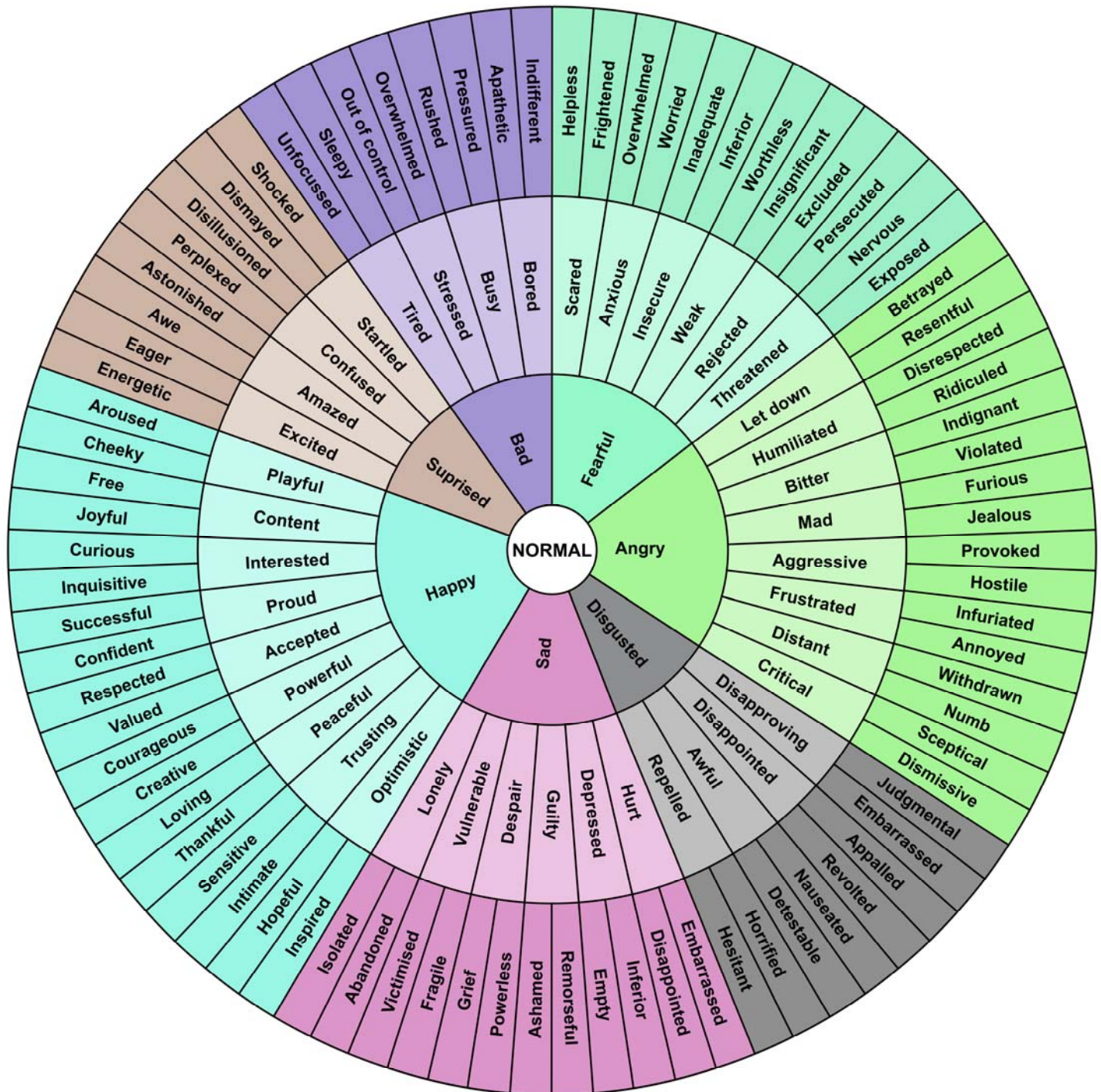
Name the Feeling

Activity Overview:

You will use the wheel of emotions to label your emotions and consider why you are feeling the way you do.

Directions:

1. Use the wheel of emotions below to identify how you are currently feeling.



Name the Feeling

2. Once you have identified your emotion, discuss the follow-up questions.

What am I feeling?

Why am I feeling this way?

How can I manage this feeling?

How can I care for myself today?

Class Cover Letter

Activity Overview:

You will write a professional cover letter to introduce yourself to your instructor.

Directions:

1. If necessary, conduct research and locate examples of how to write a cover letter.
2. Write a cover letter to introduce yourself which includes the following information:
 - Your strengths
 - Something unique you bring to the classroom
 - Academic and career goals and how this class supports those goals
 - Three accomplishments you are most proud of
 - Any specific learning needs the instructor should be aware of
 - One suggestion of something the instructor can do to help you be successful in the classroom
3. Remember the letter should be written with a professional approach. Be sure to include a salutation (greeting) and closing.
4. Submit your class cover letter as directed by your instructor.