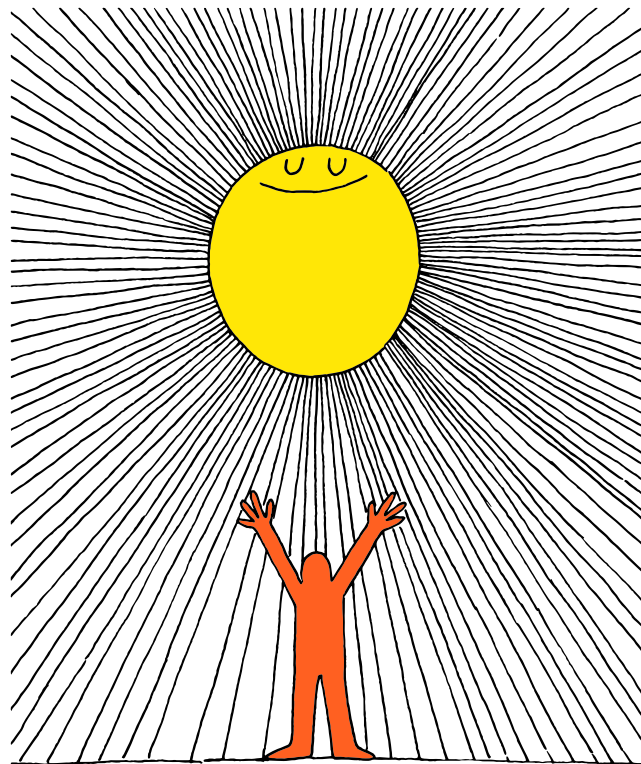


WELL-BEING USA CURRICULUM
**Learning About Empathy
and Compassion**



KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

Lessons 8 and 9

THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE

WELL- BEING USA



Well-being USA is an educational program that uses evidence-based tools, resources and everyday actions to nurture and promote positive well-being in students of all ages.

This resource is focused on supporting K-3 level students build the foundation of social-emotional learning and support educators in the integration of well-being into their classrooms.

The collection of 15 lessons is easy to use, classroom friendly and provides tools and activities to nurture well-being in your students.

The Road to Empathy



LESSON 8

THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE



Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the positive human quality empathy. Via experiential learning, students will learn about the role of empathy in their lives and in their relationships. These concepts will help support students in an upcoming lesson on compassion.

Objectives:

- Students watch or listen to a story that serves as a catalyst for conversations about empathy.
- Students investigate and learn about empathy.
- Students apply their knowledge in a series of scenarios designed to foster empathy.

Estimated Time:

40 to 45 minutes

Materials:

Projector and screen or monitor; writing paper; chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard

Skills Learned:



CRITICAL
THINKING



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS



REFLECTION
SKILLS



SELF-CARE
SKILLS



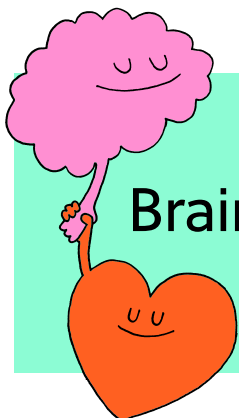
SELF
MANAGEMENT
SKILLS



SOCIAL
AWARENESS
SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS
SKILLS



Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

Differentiation for Grade Levels

Optional: Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

Kindergarten

- Part 2, Step 2: Add more examples to illustrate what it means to "walk in someone else's shoes."
- Part 3, Step 2: Begin by modeling your answers for the first few empathy scenarios, followed by discussing a few as a class, and then you may choose to have students think-pair-share on a few of them, if you feel they are ready to do so.

1st Grade

- Part 2, Step 2: *See Kindergarten differentiation for Part 2, Step 2
- Part 3, Step 2: To check for understanding, model answering empathy scenarios and/or answering them as a whole class before having students think-pair-share.

2nd Grade

- Keep lesson as is, differentiating as needed for your unique group of students

3rd Grade

- Part 3, Step 2: After discussing some of the empathy scenarios, you may choose to have students create their own fictional scenarios. Students could even work in small groups or partners to act out the scenarios.



GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is something in the brain that helps us sleep. What are some healthy ways to boost GABA?

- Practice mindfulness or yoga
- Exercise
- Eat healthy food like bananas, almonds, spinach, potatoes, lentils, brown rice and citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruits and lemons)

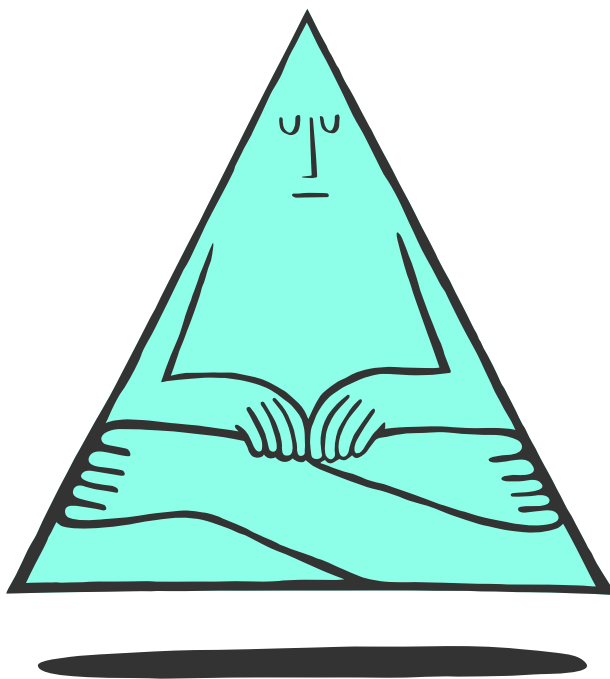
Part 1: Reflect and Connect (5 minutes)

Mindful Start (optional)

Objective: To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Let's begin by taking a short mindful moment.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap. (Alternate: First, find a comfortable seat on the carpet. Rest your hands on your lap.)
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or the floor).
- Now, just begin by noticing how your body feels sitting here.
- No need to do anything but notice what you feel.
- Turn your attention to your breath for a few moments.
- Try taking two more deep breaths in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth. See if you can notice your breath filling up your belly...
- Before we start our lesson today, reflect for a moment on our work on gratitude. You might think about something that you feel grateful for ... maybe a kind action from somebody or something in nature that made you happy.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.



Part 2: Reflect and Celebrate (15 minutes)

Step 1: Set the Stage

Overview: *The intention of this story/video is to provide students with a touchpoint for a conversation about empathy. You can use this read aloud video of [The Cool Bean by Jory John](#), or select either a video or book (see video and book lists at the end of this lesson) to spark students' thinking about empathy.*

Directions to students:

We are now going to watch a short video (or read a short story). As you listen/watch, notice what you think and feel.

After the video or story, ask students to either write down or share out loud (depending on grade level) how they think the people from the story might have been thinking or feeling during specific events that happened in the video.

Ask students: What do you think the main person in the story was thinking and feeling?

Write their ideas on the board. You may make a chart to outline how the main person was feeling during key points in the story. For developing readers, you may also include symbols or color-code different emotions to support comprehension.

Step 2: Learn

Ask students if they have ever heard the word "empathy" before. Gather students' prior knowledge and thoughts about empathy, if any.

If students need a nudge, ask if they have ever heard the term "walking in someone else's shoes." Does this elicit any thoughts about what empathy might mean? Next, share the following definition:

- Empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of another person.

Project or write the definition on the board.

Ask students how they think empathy (understanding how someone else might be feeling) could help us with creating a caring classroom.

Lastly, unpack the definitions a little more to ensure comprehension. Empathy helps us form healthy relationships and communities. Is there anything I missed? What questions do you have?

Part 3: Application—Empathy Scenarios

(20–30 minutes)

Step 1: Empathy and Emotions

Objective: Students will practice perspective-taking and empathy via scenarios. Educators will select from the following scenarios and invite students to reflect on how they might feel if they were in that position.

As a challenger for older students, write each scenario on chart paper and post around the room. Invite students to visit each scenario page and write down the emotion they think the person might be feeling. For developing readers, read each scenario aloud and have students raise their hands to share their thoughts.

First, with your students, brainstorm a list of emotions and project or write them on the board.

Examples:

Happy	Sad	Angry
Excited	Disappointed	Frightened
Calm	Upset	Frustrated
Relaxed	Discouraged	Surprised

Step 2: Empathy Scenarios

Next, select from the following list of scenarios or come up with your own scenarios that best fit your students' cultural context:

- A classmate found out she was not included in an invitation for the birthday party of another classmate.
- A classmate has worked on a science project about a topic they're passionate about. They have put weeks of effort into the project and get selected to present their project in front of the whole school.
- One of your classmates has not studied for a test that you have tomorrow.
- A group of students at your school have started a fundraising campaign to give clean water access

to a community in need. They received twice the amount of donations they expected, doubling their fundraising goal.

- A classmate scored the winning goal in their soccer game.
- Your friend is going to their very first karate class and they don't know anyone there.
- Your friend lost their favorite necklace, which was a special gift from a loved one.
- A classmate really wants to play hide-and-seek at recess, but all of their friends want to play a different game.

Share each scenario and then invite students to reflect on what emotions might be present for the student character in the scenario.

Invite students to then share their ideas in small groups or as a class.

Guiding questions for students:

1. What might the student be thinking?
2. What might this student be feeling?
3. Have you ever felt that way?

Step 3: Reflection

Invite pairs to share out their scenarios and ideas for showing empathy toward their character.

Following the empathy scenarios, debrief with your students.

- How does empathy help our relationships with others?
- Give students the key message: Empathy is important for our well-being. **Empathy helps us to have positive relationships with others!**

Empathy Book and Video List

A Sick Day for Amos McGee, Phillip S
(supports empathy for ages 2-6)

The Rabbit Listened, Cori Doerfeld
(supports empathy for ages 3-5)

The Story of Ferdinand, Munro Leaf
(supports empathy for ages 3-5)

You Hold Me UP, Monique Gray Smith
(supports well-being and resilience for ages 3-5)

The Teddy Bear, David McPhail
(supports empathy for ages 3-6)

Hey Little Ant, Phillip and Hannah Hoose
(supports empathy for ages 3-7)

Bear Feels Sick, Karma Wilson
(supports empathy for ages 3-7)

One, Kathryn Otoshi
(supports empathy for ages 4-6)

We're All Wonders, R.J. Palacio
(supports empathy for ages 4-8)

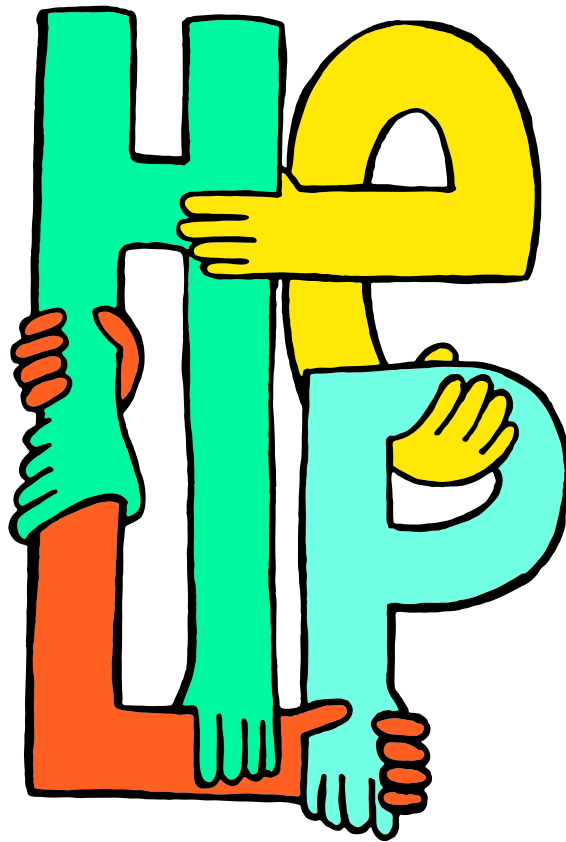
Chair for My Mother, Vera B. Williams
(supports empathy for ages 4-8)

Under the Lemon Moon, Edith Hope Fine
(supports empathy, compassion, social awareness
and generosity for ages 5-8)

The Orange Shirt Story, Phyllis Webstad
(also supports resilience, fighting racism and bullying
for ages 6-8)

Listening to My Heart, Gabi Garcia
(supports empathy and self-compassion for ages 6-10)

The Road to Compassion



LESSON 9

THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE



Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the positive human quality compassion. Via reflective and critical thinking and experiential learning, students will learn about the role of compassion in their lives and in their larger community. These concepts will help support students in an upcoming lesson on altruism.

Objectives:

- Students consider a quote that serves as a catalyst for conversations about compassion.
- Students investigate and learn about compassion.
- Students apply their knowledge in a series of scenarios designed to help them understand how empathy moves into action with compassion.

Skills Learned:



CRITICAL
THINKING



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS



REFLECTION
SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS
SKILLS



SELF-CARE
SKILLS



SELF
MANAGEMENT
SKILLS



SOCIAL
AWARENESS
SKILLS

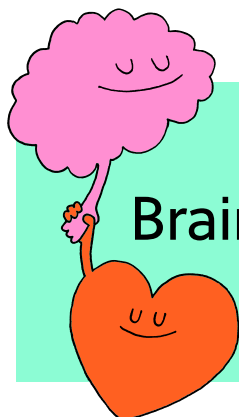
Estimated Time:

This is a multi-part lesson consisting of two 30- to 40-minute activities.

This lesson can be completed over several days.

Materials:

Projector and screen or monitor; writing paper; chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard



Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

Differentiation for Grade Levels

Optional: Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

Kindergarten

- Part 2, Step 1: Instead of going into a discussion about the definition of “empathy”, you may ask students to recall a scenario from lesson 8 and how the character in the scenario felt, then review how recognizing that feeling is empathy.
- Part 2, Step 2: Take your time on this part of lesson 9. Slow down explaining the difference between empathy and compassion and give examples of each. You may revisit the scenarios from lesson 8 to model empathy and compassion. Narrow down discussion questions to focus on times they have tried to help someone feel better.
- Part 3: You may choose to model the answers to a few scenarios, or discuss them as a class before having students think-pair-share. Or, instead of having students think-pair-share, you may choose to have students draw a picture of a time they helped someone feel better (can be a real-life example, or a fictional one) and then share.

1st Grade

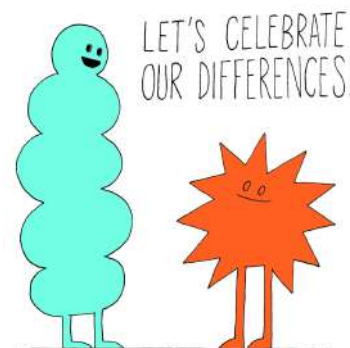
- Part 2, Step 1: Instead of beginning with a discussion about the definition of “empathy”, you may ask students to recall a scenario from lesson 8 and how the character in the scenario felt, then review how recognizing that feeling is empathy. After this review, ask student if they can describe the meaning of empathy in their own words.
- Part 2, Step 2: *See kindergarten differentiation for Part 2, Step 2.
- Part 3: You may choose to model the answers to a few scenarios, or discuss them as a class before having students think-pair-share.

2nd Grade

- As a challenger, you could ask students to give examples of what showing the characters in the scenarios a lack of compassion might look like. You may ask “Why do you think someone might show a lack of compassion instead of compassion?” to spark deeper thought and class discussion.

3rd Grade

- Part 2, Step 2: After reviewing the definitions for empathy and compassion, give students the opportunity to decipher the difference between empathy and compassion on their own before discussing it further as a class, and see if they can recall how compassion was shown in the read aloud from lesson 8.
- Part 3: *See 2nd grade differentiation for Part 3



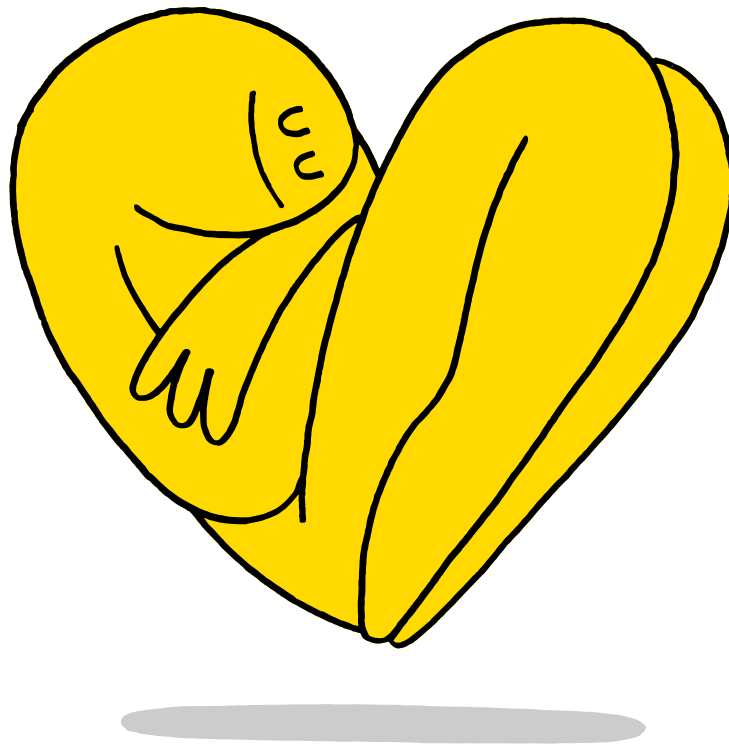
Part 1: Reflect and Connect (5 minutes)

Mindful Start (optional)

Objective: To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Let's begin by taking a short mindful moment.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap. (Alternate: First, find a comfortable seat on the carpet. Rest your hands on your lap.)
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or the floor).
- Now, just begin by noticing how your body feels sitting here.
- No need to do anything but notice what you feel.
- Turn your attention to your breath for a few moments.
- Try taking two more deep breaths in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth. See if you can notice your breath filling up your belly...
- Before we start our lesson today, reflect for a moment on our work on gratitude. You might think about something that you feel grateful for ... maybe a kind action from somebody or something in nature that made you happy.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.



Part 2: Investigate and Learn (20–30 minutes)

Step 1: Review: Empathy

Overview: *The intention of this activity is to provide students with a touchpoint for a conversation about compassion.*

Directions to students:

- Ask students to think back to your earlier conversation about empathy. Do they remember what empathy means?
- Have students remind you of the shared definition of empathy that they came up with together as a class.
- Lastly, unpack the definitions a little more to ensure comprehension.
- Invite students to reflect back on the empathy stories and scenarios you explored together as a class. What do they remember from the activity? Why is empathy important?

Step 2: Learn

Ask students to consider the term “compassion.” Have they heard it anywhere before? Spend a few moments gathering students’ prior knowledge of the term.

- Share this definition with the class: Compassion is concern for the well-being of someone who is suffering and a desire to ease that person’s suffering. (Alternatively: Compassion means we care about others, treat them with kindness and feel a strong desire to help people in need.)

Project or write the definition on the board.

Next, invite student ideas. Select prompts from the following guiding questions to spark critical thinking and help students access their previous knowledge about the concepts.

- What do you already know about compassion?
- Where have you heard about these terms? (Note that it is okay if students are not sure or unfamiliar with the terms.)
- What does compassion look like in your life?
- How might compassion help in your friendships?
- How does compassion impact our community?
- How is compassion the same or different from empathy?
- **Definition reminder:** Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Nudge students to think of compassion as “empathy in action.” (First we understand the feelings of another and then we consider what we could do to help that person feel better and we do that thing.)
- Is there anything I missed?
- What questions do you have?

Part 3: Application—From Empathy to Compassion (20–30 minutes)

Purpose: To help students apply their ideas about how empathy moves to compassion, students will be given scenarios and imagine what might be helpful if they were in their character’s situation.

Then, students will consider actions they could take in that situation to help their character.

Overview: As a class, students will explore a variety of scenarios (found at the end of this lesson, pg. 19). First, students will describe how their character might feel. Then, they will come up with ideas for ways to express compassion to their character.

Read out scenarios one by one to the class. (To challenge older students, you may split the class into small groups or pairs and have them dive deeper into each scenario before sharing their thoughts as a class.)

Follow these three steps and write student ideas on the board (suggestion: organize thoughts into chart form):

1. What might your character be thinking and feeling?
2. Have you ever felt that way?
3. What actions could you take to show empathy and compassion to your character?

Optional: Extend this activity by inviting students to put on a short skit of a scenario that they come up with. This helps to ensure examples are meaningful and relevant to your students’ experience. Students can be put into groups of three to four.

Suggestions for scenarios:

- There is a new student joining the class.
- A student is being teased. (What would the bystanders do?)
- A student is left out of a game.
- A student lost their favorite toy in the schoolyard.

(Additional scenarios available at the end of the lesson, pg. 19)

Reflection

Following the compassion scenarios, debrief with your students.

- How do empathy and compassion help our relationships with others?

Give students the key message:

- Empathy and compassion are important for our well-being. Empathy and compassion are central to having positive relationships with others because it helps us show others that we care.

Compassion Book List

A Sick Day for Amos McGee, Phillip S
(supports empathy for ages 2-6)

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge, Mem Fox
(this picture book supports compassion for ages 3-8)

The Rabbit Listened, Cori Doerfeld
(supports empathy for ages 3-5)

The Story of Ferdinand, Munro Leaf
(supports empathy for ages 3-5)

You Hold Me UP, Monique Gray Smith
(supports well-being and resilience for ages 3-5)

The Teddy Bear, David McPhail
(supports empathy for ages 3-6)

Hey Little Ant, Phillip and Hannah Hoose
(supports empathy for ages 3-7)

Bear Feels Sick, Karma Wilson
(supports empathy for ages 3-7)

One, Kathryn Otoshi
(supports empathy for ages 4-6)

We're All Wonders, R.J. Palacio
(supports empathy for ages 4-8)

Chair for My Mother, Vera B. Williams
(supports empathy for ages 4-8)

Under the Lemon Moon, Edith Hope Fine
(supports empathy, compassion, social awareness
and generosity for ages 5-8)

The Orange Shirt Story, Phyllis Webstad
(also supports resilience, fighting racism and bullying
for ages 6-8)

Listening to My Heart, Gabi Garcia
(supports empathy and self-compassion for ages 6-10)

Part 4: Daily Action (20 minutes)

See the Empathy and Compassion Daily Actions that are provided at the end of this lesson. Ask students to consider Daily Actions that they could bring into their own life.

- Using the Daily Actions or your own ideas, think about how you can add more empathy and compassion in your life at school, in your community and at home.
- Invite students to select one of these ideas to try out and create a reflection (for example, a journal, drawing or poem) of their experience.



Altruism

Helping others, or showing altruism, can be linked to serotonin AND oxytocin production. Serotonin is linked to happiness and oxytocin reduces stress and helps us show empathy to others.

Daily Actions for Empathy and Compassion

Daily actions are designed to promote transferable learning by inviting students to explore the module topics across four life domains: Self, School, Community and Home.

After implementing the empathy and compassion lessons, students can be provided time to explore each of the following related daily actions. When introducing these actions, you could explain the science behind them and perhaps provide examples to get students going. For example, studies have shown

that compassionate empathy helps us to connect and better understand one another, which can improve our relationships and overall well-being. Empathy and compassion are like two peas in a pod. The next time you have a sense of someone else's feelings, notice if it makes you feel like taking action and doing something to help/support them.

Following the exploration of daily actions, students are invited to write a personal reflection of their experience applying the daily actions.

Self: "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." — Dalai Lama

Taking care of the world includes being kind to yourself. What is one nice thing you can do for yourself this week? For example, going for a walk in nature, spending time with friends or cheering for your favorite sports team.

Classroom/School: Discover a new perspective

The next time you see someone in your classroom/school faced with a challenge, try to imagine what they might be going through. Remember to ask yourself this question: How would I feel if...?

Community: Compassion for the planet

What is an act of kindness you can do to help the planet? For example, water a plant, compost, turn off the lights or plant a seed/tree. Write it down, including what day you will try it this week.

Home: Pick a family member

What is one small thing you can do this week to brighten a family member's day?

Compassion Scenarios

Either use the suggested examples, or invite students to generate their own ideas to promote empathy and compassion for self, school, community and home and to share these ideas with the rest of the class.

Someone in your class has just returned from a camping trip and is excited to share their photos in a presentation to the class. They overhear another classmate saying that camping is stupid and now they are not sure if they want to do the presentation anymore.

At lunchtime, one of your classmates takes out a snack that is traditional to the country their family is from. Other classmates begin commenting on the way the food smells and say it looks disgusting.

Your teacher usually greets the class in the morning with lot of energy and enthusiasm. Today, you notice that the teacher is quiet, distracted and looks tired and sad.

Your friend has recently become really interested in basketball. They have been practicing really hard to try out for the school team. Today, they found out that they didn't make the team.

One of your friends wears a winter jacket that is too small and has holes in it. Someone in the class teases them about their jacket, but they have told you that their parents couldn't afford to buy new winter coats for them and their siblings this year.

A classmate of yours loves to read independently and always seems to do well on tests and assignments. But when it comes to reading aloud or presenting in front of the class, they tend to get nervous and stumble on their words.

A student in your class moved to your school from another country a few years ago. The community they were born in is sometimes unsafe; they still have family members living there and sometimes worry about their well-being. Even though they worry sometimes, they are happy at their new school and have made lots of friends.

Your friend likes to sing but has never sung in front of an audience. They were nervous to sign up for the school talent show but, with some encouragement from you and other friends, decided to do it. They received lots of compliments about their performance and are glad they did it, even though they were nervous.

Someone in your class seems quiet and sad when they arrive to school in the morning. You know their family dog has been sick and you later learn that they had to put their dog down earlier this week.

Your friend has been unable to play after school for the past few weeks. You find out that their parent has been sick, and that they have been spending most of their free time caring for them and helping around the home.

A boy in your class spends most of his time with female classmates. Some of the boys in the class call him names and exclude him from their activities.

Your friend has a favorite necklace that they received as a gift from their grandmother. It's their most valued possession and they wear it every day. After recess, they notice that the necklace has fallen off and they can't find it.

**WELL~
BEING
USA**