



MODULE

3

**BUILDING
SELF-AWARENESS**



MODULE 3

Building Self-Awareness

If students completed Modules one to two, they uncovered three key attributes and skills that contribute to kindness: Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Relationship Skills. While there are many skills and attributes that support kind behaviors, these three are particularly powerful. Exploration of these skills allows students to scaffold up to potentially challenging or vulnerable acts by following a natural learning progression:

- **Self-Awareness:** I understand what's going on inside of me.
- **Empathy:** I understand what may be going on inside of you.
- **Relationship Skills:** I can use empathy and caring communication to build relationships with others.

The majority of Modules 3–5 focuses on the immersive experience of each skill, rather than learning about each skill. Each module can be implemented individually, or in part, or can be taught as a scaffolded learning progression.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify, explain, and exercise Self-Awareness skills.
- Students will be able to exercise the Self-Management skill of Stress Management.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy, Recognizing Strengths, Accurate Self-Perception
- (CASEL) Self-Management: Stress Management

FACILITATION TIPS

Module 3 can be completed in one extended session, each part taught individually on separate days, or combined as desired.

If you are facilitating virtually, introduction to Self-Awareness skills and modeling can be facilitated synchronously in whole group virtual sessions if possible, given the nuanced aspects of nonverbal cues and felt emotions.

- If needed, however, some introductions and modeling can be done *asynchronously* via recorded video, and some discussion can be facilitated through tools like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board or video platforms.

Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.



Estimated Total Time

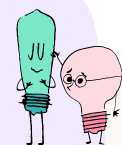
70–90 minutes

Module 3 consists of five parts (and an optional sixth) that can be completed in one extended session, taught individually over five days, or combined as needed.



Materials

- Student Journals ([pdf download](#) | [copy Google Slides](#))
- Whiteboard, Smartboard, Digital Presentation Tool, or Chart Paper
- [Name the Emotion Deck](#)
- [The “How Am I Feeling?” Journal](#)
- (Optional) [Geometric Shapes](#)



PART 1

Getting Started with Self-Awareness



Estimated Total Time
10–15 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

Tell students, “To show kindness to others, we’ve got to first be able to show kindness to ourselves. Being kind to ourselves is an important first step and more powerful than you might realize. Studies have linked it to personal traits like wisdom, happiness, and thinking positively (also known as optimism). It can even make you healthier! Being kind helps you stay strong and work through hard things like feeling angry or sad.”

Tell students, “Part of showing kindness to yourself is knowing who you are, understanding the thoughts and emotions going on inside of you, and connecting that to the behaviors and actions you take. Building up your *self-awareness* gives you the space and understanding to care for yourself, first and foremost. Once you do, it becomes much easier to find opportunities to show kindness to others.

Share a personal illustration with students that demonstrates your self-awareness and the connection between emotions → behaviors and action → kindness to self.

Example. “I am not a morning person. It takes me several hours to feel fully alive and myself in the mornings. I know that I can become anxious and irritable if I have to interact too much, too early. To show kindness to myself, I start my morning with a warm cup of tea and read quietly for several minutes to help me level-set before I face the world.”

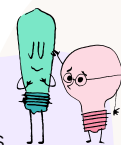
Tell students they will practice self-awareness through several activities to get a better idea of who they are and what makes them tick, and to begin practicing kindness and care toward themselves.

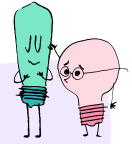
2. NAME THE EMOTION

For students to develop the self-awareness skill of identifying emotions, they must first develop and practice *emotional literacy*. Exposing students to a range of emotions and teaching them to recognize and accurately identify those emotions is an essential starting point. In this activity, students will view a series of faces displaying a variety of emotions and attempt to match the provided vocabulary word with each face.

FACILITATION TIPS

- Take time to introduce each emotion to ensure students have an understanding of the terms in context. Encourage students to create sentences or share examples using the terms correctly before displaying the faces and recording responses in their journals.
- You may opt to facilitate this activity by [projecting each face](#) for the whole group one at a time, concluding with the Student Reflection. This is especially helpful for younger students.
- Or, print the The Name the Emotions deck (linked above) and use it to create an anchor chart that can be referenced throughout the module.





VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

- You may opt to assign students step one (below) as an independent activity (asynchronous), and then facilitate step two synchronously as a whole group.
- You may opt to convert this to a drag and drop whiteboard activity for students.



Step 1: Guide students to the *Name the Emotion* activity in their journal. Students will have a vocabulary and definitions bank to select from. Tell students to do their best to identify and record the appropriate emotion for each face.

Faces/Emotions Key + Vocabulary List



Conflicted: Uncertain or unsure about something
Synonyms: Ambivalent



Aggravated: Angry or displeased
Synonyms: Annoyed, Irritated, Exasperated, Irked



Ecstatic: Full of joy
Synonyms: Jubilant, Joyful, Elated



Discouraged: Feeling sad or unhappy
Synonyms: Sad, Dejected, Depressed, Melancholy



Confident: Feeling certain of yourself
Synonyms: Secure, Upbeat, Poised



Relaxed: Feeling of calm or peace
Synonyms: Tranquil, Serene, Comfortable



Lonely: alone or without company
Synonyms: Isolated, Secluded, Abandoned



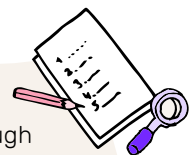
Thoughtful: Deep in thought
Synonyms: Contemplative, Reflective, Meditative



Weary: Tired or worn out
Synonyms: Fatigued, Exhausted



Anxious: Full of worry
Synonyms: Nervous, Troubled, Worried, Fearful



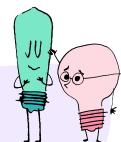
Step 2: After students have attempted to match the emotions to the facial expressions, go through each face together as a class and discuss each expression and underlying emotion, modeling how you came to your conclusion and asking students what clues led them to interpret each face as they did.

Have students write or sketch a concrete example of one or two emotions in their journal.

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

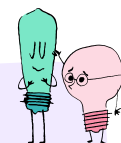
In their journals, have students reflect on the following questions:

- Why do you think it's important to be able to identify many different emotions?
- How does understanding how people feel connect to kindness?



VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Post these prompts to your digital platform for reflection following Step Two.



FACILITATION TIP

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

PART 2

Practicing Mindfulness



Estimated Total Time
15-20 minutes

**SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions;
Self-Management: Stress Management, Impulse Control**

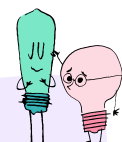
1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

Mindfulness is a simple, yet powerful practice that provides numerous cognitive and emotional benefits, including the reduction of stress and anxiety, the ability to better identify experienced thoughts and feelings, and growth in resilience.

Tell students: “*Mindfulness* is exactly what it sounds like: the practice of focusing on what you are thinking, observing, and feeling in the present moment. It’s being mindful.”

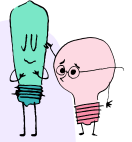
Explain that mindfulness doesn’t have to be complicated. The [Child Mind Institute](https://www.childmindinstitute.org/) recommends several activities that are simple, yet effective, like:

- **Squeezing Muscles:** Starting with your toes, pick one muscle and squeeze it tightly, counting to five. When you release, notice how your body changes. Repeat the exercise with one new muscle at a time.
- **Belly Breathing:** Put one hand on your stomach (optional: put the other hand on your chest). Breathe into your stomach, feeling it expand. And then slowly breathe out, feeling it deflate.
- **Coloring/Drawing:** This is as simple as it sounds. Color or draw on any materials and with any tools. As you do, focus on the shapes, colors, textures, as well as the feeling of using your hand(s) to create.
- **Listening to Music:** When listening to music, choose something specific to focus on; listen for specific instruments or sounds, listen closely to the lyrics, or experience the entire song.



FACILITATION TIP

Learn Kind recommends that this activity be facilitated *synchronously* (whether in-person or virtually), but it is possible to facilitate *asynchronously* by recorded video if necessary, guiding students to follow along in their journals.



OPTIONAL FACILITATION TIP

Depending on your and your students' level of comfort, it may be helpful to build up to the mindfulness exercise with some practice. You can do this several ways:

- **Real-Talk:** Let's get real for a moment! Tell students that practicing mindfulness might feel a little strange at first, especially if they've never done it before.
- **Practice Posture:** Have students practice the mindfulness posture described in *Practicing a Mindful Moment*, and close their eyes while sitting silently for a few seconds. (You can add to this by having students count their breath to 10).
- **Start Small:** Start with any of the simple exercises listed above, or create your own.
- **Mini-Mindfulness:** (20-30 second mindfulness exercise) Have students sit comfortably, and guide them to do the Belly Breathing exercise described above. As they breathe, tell students to feel their breath expanding and contracting underneath their hands. Then ask them to reflect: "How are you feeling right now? Is your body tight, open? What emotions are present?"

2. PRACTICING A MINDFUL MOMENT

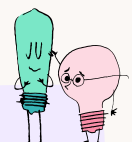
Use the following process to lead students through a one or two-minute mindfulness exercise.

- 1 **Get comfortable:** Have students sit comfortably in a circle or at their seats. Try to limit distractions.
- 2 **Breathe:** Tell students to imagine they have a balloon in their bellies that they will inflate and deflate by breathing in and out. Have students place one hand on their stomach.
 - a. Inhale: Students breathe in through their nose as you count to three.
 - b. Exhale: Students breathe out through their mouth as you count to three.
 - c. Ensure students have this rhythm down before starting the next step.
 - d. When you feel confident students are ready, tell them to close their eyes and repeat two or three more times, gently instructing them to only think about their breathing.
- 3 **Notice:** Gently tell students to begin to notice the feeling(s) that are bubbling up to the surface. What emotion are they experiencing? Tell them there are no right or wrong emotions. Whatever is present is allowed to be there. Allow 20-30 seconds for this part.
- 4 **Breathe:** For the last 15-20 seconds, direct students' attention back to their breathing, inhaling deeply through the nose, and slowly exhaling through the mouth.
- 5 **Transition:** When time has ended, gently direct students to open their eyes and journal.

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

Student Reflection: In their journals have students reflect on their Mindful Moment and record what they noticed during the exercise using the following questions. Students can write or draw their responses:

- What did you notice during your mindful moment? Think about what you heard, what you thought, what you felt in your body, and the emotions you felt.
- How can you use mindfulness on your own?



FACILITATION TIP

Instead of reflecting in their journals, you may consider partner pairs for student sharing and reflecting.

PART 3

What Emotion Did I Bring to Class?



Estimated Total Time
10–15 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy, Accurate Self-Perception; Self-Management: Stress Management, Impulse Control

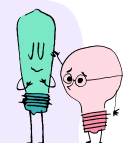
1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

This activity takes students a little deeper by using mindfulness to create the space and stillness to get in touch with their primary emotion(s). When students are able to discern the primary emotion they are feeling, they'll reflect on how it's influencing their actions. All of this helps them to feel what it's like to identify their internal processes and understand how they might care for themselves (and eventually others). You'll facilitate the exercise for the whole class if possible, while students follow independently.

Tell students that this activity is designed to give them tools that they can use whenever they need to take a pause or begin to work through challenging emotions.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Although Learn Kind recommends that you lead this activity *synchronously*, you may opt to facilitate "The Mindful Moment in Step 1" *asynchronously* through video if needed, while students follow in their journals independently.



2. PROCEDURE

Guide students through the following procedure.

Step 1: Practice a Mindful Moment: Use the following process to lead students through a one-minute mindfulness exercise, similar to the one in Part 2.

- **Get comfortable:** Have students sit comfortably in a circle or at their seats. Try to limit distractions.





- **Breathe:** Tell students to imagine they have a balloon in their bellies that they will inflate and deflate by breathing in and out. Have students place one hand on their stomach.
 - **Inhale:** Students breathe in through their nose as you count to three.
 - **Exhale:** Students breathe out through their mouth as you count to three.
 - Ensure students have this rhythm down before starting the next step.
 - When you feel confident students are ready, tell them to close their eyes and repeat two or three more times, gently instructing them to only think about their breathing.
- **Notice:** Gently tell students to begin to notice the feeling(s) that are bubbling up to the surface. What emotion(s) are they experiencing? Tell them there are no right or wrong emotions. Whatever is present is allowed to be there. Allow 20-30 seconds for this part.
- **Breathe:** For the last 15-20 seconds, direct students' attention back to their breathing, inhaling deeply through the nose, and slowly exhaling through the mouth.
- **Transition:** When time has ended, gently direct students to open their eyes and journal.

Step 2. Identify Emotions: Now that they've practiced mindfulness, have students identify one or two primary emotions they are feeling, using the chart provided in their journal (see sample below).



Aggravated



Anxious



Bored



Confident



Conflicted



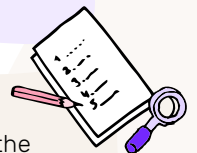
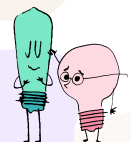
Weary

Step 3. Reflect: Have students answer the question, "How is your primary emotion influencing your behavior today? Consider the connection to your....: (Students may write or sketch in their journals)

- Body language
- Tone of voice
- Facial expression
- Attitude
- How you are treating others

FACILITATION TIP

Tell students that they can use these tools on their own, whenever they need them.



(Optional) Step 4. Share Out: Have each student call out (type in chat box or share emoji) the primary emotion they're experiencing and give the class the opportunity to quietly reflect on what they hear. Hearing peers name their emotions creates a greater understanding of how emotions are expressed, lays the foundation for empathy, and creates a greater sense of connected community.

- Or, instead of verbally sharing one at a time, have students share the facial expression of the emotion they chose one at a time, or altogether.

PART 4

The “How Am I Feeling?” Journal



Estimated Total Time
5-10 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness:
Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy;
Self-Management: Stress Management, Self-Motivation

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group or Video Presentation)

Tell students that when they are able to identify their emotions, they have the power to make constructive and proactive choices about those emotions. Choosing to make positive choices in response to emotions, rather than reacting, is the beginning of the social-emotional skill of Self-Management. And when it comes to Self-Management, even small, intentional choices can have a big impact on how we feel and how we relate to others.

2. JOURNAL OVERVIEW

Tell students that you are going to give them a tool called the [“How Am I Feeling?” Journal](#) that will help them develop the skill of Self-Management. Have students access the journal or present it to them as a whole group. Provide an overview of the following steps:

- 1 Practice a mindful moment (or even a few seconds!) to observe the primary emotion(s) you are feeling.
- 2 Circle the one to two primary feelings you are experiencing in this moment or illustrate the blank circle if you are feeling an emotion not represented in the chart.
- 3 Do something that you enjoy for a little while and then write or draw what you did. Choose from the list of suggestions.
- 4 Reflect on how you feel now that you’ve done the positive action. Reflect on how you feel now that you’ve done the positive action.
- 5 Repeat if desired, or try a new action and see how you feel.

3. WRAP IT UP

Tell students that this tool is available to them anytime they need and can become a part of their daily routine if desired. The journal can be completed digitally or printed.

PART 5

I Know My Strengths



Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Recognizing Strengths, Self-Confidence

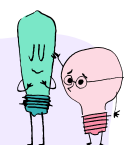
1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group or Video Facilitation)

Now that students have practiced identifying and managing emotions, conclude the self-awareness exploration by building confidence through recognizing strengths. Students will practice self-awareness by drawing a picture or writing about one or two strengths they have in their journals. Have students reflect on these strengths in their journal. Tell them that they will not have to share these reflections if they don't want to.

FACILITATION TIP

If students have trouble identifying their strengths, you can provide them a list, or help them identify unique strengths that you have seen in them. Some sentence stems to help students are:

- "I'm good at...."
- "I find it easy to...."
- "People usually ask me for help on...."



2. (OPTIONAL) MINDFULNESS FINGER FOCUS EXERCISE (Whole Group or Video Facilitation)

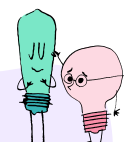
After students have reflected on their strengths, have them choose a one syllable word to describe them (strong, brave, star, or boss) and write it in their journal. Guide students through the mindfulness exercise.

FACILITATION TIP

For younger students, brainstorm some inspiring one-syllable describing words and post them in the classroom for students to choose.

VIRTUAL TIP

If sharing out is difficult for your students in a whole group virtual setting, provide a prompt through your digital platform asking students to share one-syllable describing words. Then compile and share them before the exercise. Tell students to choose one of the words that they think best describes them and write it down (if possible).



Guide students through the following mindfulness affirmation.

- ① Model bringing your thumb to your pointer finger, then middle finger, then ring, then pinky. Have students join in and repeat two or three times until they get the hang of it.
- ② Have students do the motion again, having all students count aloud “1, 2, 3, 4” together.
- ③ Have students do it silently, focusing on the count and noticing when their mind wanders.
- ④ Have students do the hand motion again, but instead of counting 1, 2, 3, 4, have them say “I am so [word they chose]” or “I am a [word they chose]”. Have them say it aloud, but quietly.
- ⑤ Have them repeat the hand motion, and say their phrase silently.
- ⑥ Have students repeat this on their own for several seconds.

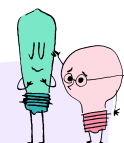
3. STUDENT REFLECTION

Wrap up this section with a reminder to students that part of showing kindness to yourself is knowing who you are, understanding the thoughts and emotions going on inside of you, and connecting that to the behaviors and actions you take. Building up your *self-awareness* gives you the space and understanding to care for yourself, first and foremost. Once you do, it becomes much easier to find opportunities to show kindness to others.

In their journals, have students reflect on how their exploration of self-awareness connects to self-kindness (or their previous research and the Big Question).

FACILITATION TIP

Discuss and record responses as a whole group. Encourage students to record one response in their journals that they connected with, or have them complete this step independently.



(OPTIONAL) PART 6

Geometric Shapes Quiz



Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

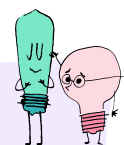
SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Accurate Self-Perception

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group Intro, Individual Exercise)

Students will begin to explore self-awareness with a simple and fun personality quiz*. Tell students that our identities and personalities are wonderfully complex, and can even look a little different over time as we grow. No tool can tell us everything about our personalities, but they can help us test out certain ideas and identify some things about ourselves. This quiz is based on the idea that people may be drawn to certain shapes and forms based on our personalities, attitudes and experiences. Let's test it out and see!

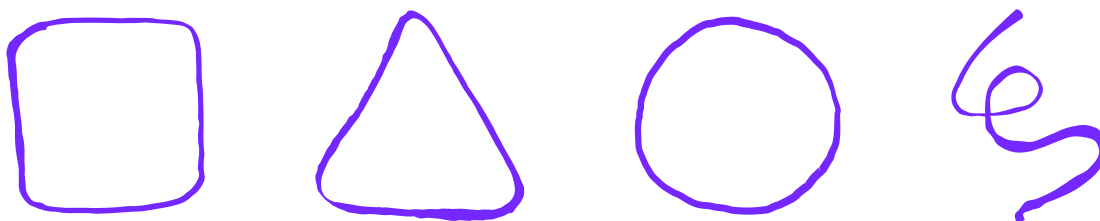
VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

If needed, you may choose to facilitate this activity (through step 4) *asynchronously* through video and have students work independently before sharing and reflecting together in step 5.



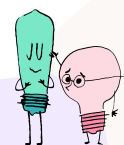
2. PREP

On the whiteboard, smartboard, digital presentation tool, or chart paper, draw a square, a triangle, a circle, and a squiggly line.



FACILITATION TIP

This is a fun activity and not intended to be prescriptive in any way. Rather than saying, "If you drew the square, you *are*...", say, "This is the description of the square. Does this sound like you, or is it way off?" **The important outcome of this activity is that students begin to gain awareness of what they actually think, feel, and prefer, even if that means saying "I disagree! I'm more like _____."**



3. PROCEDURE

Have students open their journals to the Geometric Shapes Quiz and guide them through the following procedure:



Step 1: Students draw each shape in their journal one time.

Step 2: Students choose one shape to draw a second time. Tell students to choose whichever shape they are most drawn to or like the most – there’s no wrong answer!

Step 3: Tell students that in this quiz, each shape represents certain personality traits and characteristics. As you [read the descriptions](#) of each shape, have students listen closely to identify which traits sound true for them and which ones don’t.

SHAPE	DESCRIPTION
Square	If you are drawn to the square, you may be known as a hard worker. You might stay focused so that you are able to finish what you start. You may be very organized and plan things out. You might like to think about things logically and analytically, rather than going with your gut instinct.
Triangle	If you are drawn to the triangle, you might be known as a leader. You may be good at focusing on goals and might be very motivated to meet your goals. You might take care of stuff right away, instead of taking time to come up with a plan.
Circle	If you are drawn to the circle, you may be very friendly and caring. It might be easy for you to empathize and sympathize with others, feeling their happiness or pain like it’s your own. If people you know argue, you might be the one who helps them solve their problem and you might like to keep everybody happy.
Squiggly Line	If you are drawn to the squiggle, you may be highly creative and love to generate new ideas. You might find yourself thinking “what if?” a lot of the time. You might find yourself doing things differently than most. You might really enjoy inventing new things.



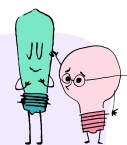
Step 4: As students listen, guide them to reflect on one or two questions in their journals (or facilitate as a class discussion):

- Does your chosen shape describe you?
- Do any of the characteristics match your personality?
- Do any of the characteristics not match your personality?
- Which shape do you think best describes you?

Step 5: Invite students to share their reflections with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Give students the option of whether or not they share, based on what they feel comfortable with. Tell students that a part of self-awareness is recognizing when they feel comfortable sharing something about themselves publically or keeping it private.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Choose a creative alternative format for students to share their results!



Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 3.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice – and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

- 1 CHOOSE** your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)
- 2 PLAN** the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act
WHO – Do it for a friend, family member, teacher, or yourself
WHEN – Choose when you will do the act (maybe it's right now!)
WHERE – Where will you do it? School, home, or somewhere else?
- 3 DO** your kind act!
- 4 OBSERVE** what happened and how you feel
- 5 (Optional) SHARE** with the class next time you meet

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| ☐ Ask someone to play | ☐ Help someone in school | ☐ Pick up litter or trash | ☐ Smile at someone | ☐ Give someone a compliment |
| ☐ Thank someone for something | ☐ Draw a picture for someone | ☐ Help with a chore at home | ☐ Go outside and enjoy nature | ☐ Take a mindful moment for yourself |