

User Guide

This holistic social-emotional health curriculum is designed to provide teachers with ways to foster students' sense of **autonomy & belonging** through opportunities for authentic expression and shared vulnerability in a safe social space. It is built on the notion that creative expression can provide a path toward wholeness and well-being.

Each of the core lessons focuses on a *Creative Resource*:

- Empathy
- Humor
- Gratitude
- Curiosity
- Tolerance for Ambiguity

These creative resources become tools for understanding ourselves and each other more deeply.

All of the lessons include:

- Experiential teacher priming exercises and facilitation tips
- An asset-based approach to supporting mental health, social relatedness, and emotional wellbeing
- Arts integrated processes that help students develop **strategies for creative flexibility, mindfulness, and resilience**
- **Creative routines** that **build community, safety, and support**—foundational ingredients for proactively addressing pervasive mental health issues such as anxiety and depression

This curriculum comes in response to a host of mental health issues that youth and, therefore educators, are grappling with, including anxiety, depression, self-harm, and increasing rates of suicide. The experiences offered here are not meant to be a substitute for professional mental health support when it is needed. Rather, these opportunities for authentic creative and artistic expression serve to cultivate safe and supportive social spaces that value the unique assets each student embodies.



Outcomes for students include:

- Strategies for increasing emotional awareness
- Strategies for coping with, expressing, and reframing challenging emotions
- Emotional resilience through self-awareness and peer connections
- Sense of autonomy and belonging in the learning environment
- Joy through sense of creative self-efficacy

Course Structure

The introduction to each lesson offers foundational teacher-facing materials and invitations to creative engagement through creative routines. Teacher practice with creative routines is highly encouraged because your embodied understanding of the experience becomes an authentic entry-point into the content, for students.

Each of the five modules contains a set of resources that support a flexible approach to implementation. There are multiple entry points to each creative challenge. You are invited to adapt all of it to meet the needs of your unique group and setting. In each module, you will find:

- Video Intro to Core Concept
- "Priming" activities & Creative Routines
- Creative Challenge(s)
- Deepening through Reflections & Extensions
- Supplemental Resources

This curriculum has been developed in partnership with local teachers, mental health professionals and arts integration specialists, thanks to a grant from the Mills Davis Foundation.

As this is a new curriculum, we can't guarantee that it will work for every group of students in the way we have designed it. We appreciate hearing about your experiences, both good and bad, and any adaptations you try as you work to make this material relevant for your students.

