



Seeds to grow **MENTAL HEALTH**

Living with Our Emotions

FOR EDUCATORS VOLUME 4

INTRODUCTION

In our [last newsletter](#), we introduced three life skills to help us deal with our emotions when we are stressed. The skills are strategies that we can use during an emotional emergency. They help us to get through distressing times without acting on our impulses and making things worse.

This newsletter will highlight three new skills that can be used to help protect and improve our mental health.



The first skill we will talk about is Self-Care. Self-Care reminds us to take time every day to improve our physical and mental well-being. By doing this, we will be better able to manage our emotions and our FIZZ when it is high.



The second skill is Listen. The Listen skill helps us pay attention to what others are saying and shows we are actively listening. By practicing this skill, we can prevent many misunderstandings.



The final skill is Respect. The Respect skill reminds us to treat ourselves and others with respect. Even if we don't feel respected, we can still show respect. Showing respect helps to improve our self-respect. Respect is difficult to define but we all know what it feels like and looks like. Respect also involves being open-minded and accepting of others, including their differences. A respectful environment is an inclusive environment.



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By working on the ways we express ourselves and communicate with others, we can improve our coping skills and confidence. This will help us to better deal with stress.



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SELF-CARE



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SELF-CARE IS A SKILL THAT WE SHOULD PRACTICE DAILY.

When we practice self-care, it helps us feel better both physically and mentally. The older you get the more self-care becomes your own responsibility. As an adult, and an educator, a lot of time is spent taking care of others. It is very important to remember to take care of yourself. Self-care helps to improve our capacity to cope with life challenges as they arise. Just like we charge our phone batteries, we need to keep ourselves energized by doing self-care activities. When we practice self-care, it becomes easier to respond when your FIZZ is high.

The word SELF in self-care can remind us to do things regularly that can recharge our own battery:

We wear helmets to help protect us when riding a bike or entering a construction site. Practicing self-care every day is like wearing a helmet. It will help to protect us BEFORE we face our next challenge.

SLEEP
EATING AND EXERCISE
LOOK AT what are our challenges, what is bothering/upsetting us the most.
FIND something fun to do everyday.

Self-care looks different for every person. Make it a priority, do at least one thing for yourself everyday.

SELF-CARE IDEAS

Be kind to yourself

- Use positive self-talk.
- Treat yourself the way you would treat a friend in the same situation.

Take up a hobby and/or learn a new skill

- This will increase your confidence and your interests.
- You can meet new people.

Help others

- Help out a community project.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Helping others, helps ourselves feel better.
- Give a compliment daily.

Have some fun and /or be creative

- Paint or colour.
- Play a board game.
- Do something that makes you laugh.
- Enjoy yourself!

Exercise regularly

- Be active. Get outside, explore a green space.
- Find an activity you enjoy doing and just do it.

Eat mindfully

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Drink more water.
- Eat with others.
- Cook your favourite meal.

Relax

- Make time for yourself.
- Find what works for you.
- Read, mediate, yoga.

Balance sleep

- Create a bedtime routine.
- Decrease social screen time.
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday.

LISTEN



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LISTENING IS AN IMPORTANT SKILL WHERE WE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO WHAT THE OTHER PERSON IS SAYING.

We can often get distracted by things going on around us, technology, or even our own thoughts. When we don't pay attention, it can lead to mistakes and misunderstandings. This can result in our FIZZ going up.

A helpful tip when we are using the LISTEN skill is to remember that we have TWO ears and ONE mouth, so we need to listen twice as much as we speak.

How can we show others that we are *really* listening to them?

***Note: It is important to remember that signs of active listening can vary across cultures.*



Eye contact.



Smiling.



Leaning in toward the person/
facing the person.



Nodding.



Verbal replies or comments:
"Yes", "OK", "Uh-Huh".



Show interest:

- Ask questions.
- Ask for more information.
- Repeat back what the speaker says to show you have understood.



Do not interrupt or change the subject.



Respect the other person's point of view.



Answer respectfully and be honest.



Treat others like you would want to be treated.

Next time you talk to someone, remember to use these skills.

RESPECT



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RESPECT IS ABOUT VALUING AND VALIDATING OTHER PEOPLE AND THEIR OPINIONS AS WELL AS RESPECTING OURSELVES.

If we show respect to others, we will get respect back from them. As we gain respect from others and give respect to others, our own self-respect increases.

GIVE RESPECT ↔ GET RESPECT



R respect self, others, and the environment.
E equality and esteem.
S say please, thank you and sorry.
P polite, kind, and considerate.
E ears to listen.
C clear, calm communication.
T treat others as we want to be treated.

Learning to recognize and celebrate how people are both the same and different helps students appreciate diversity and to respect and care for each other.

Examples of Respect

Being kind to ourselves and others.

Being honest without excuses or exaggerating.

Being reliable and on time.

Treating others, the way we want to be treated.

Recycling and reducing waste.

Examples of Disrespect

Being critical or sarcastic.

Lying or gossiping about people.

Insulting or hurting the feelings of others.

Being selfish and putting ourselves above others.

Being wasteful, not caring for the environment.

School Mental Health Ontario



**School
Mental Health
Ontario**

Classroom and school activities increase students' awareness and opportunities to practice the Self-Care, Listen, and Respect skills.

Similar activities to the skills that can be used in the classroom can be found at [School Mental Health Ontario](#). Below are some examples of activities to use in your classroom:

SELF-CARE

<u>Start Well: Five days of ready to use classroom activities to connect, calm and begin your day</u>	Start your day in a good way and support the students as they navigate and understand this transition back to school. This activity promotes connection and calm.
<u>Self-Advocacy Cards</u>	Assist students to become aware of their own needs and preferences, to self-advocate, and to build their help-seeking behaviours.
<u>Gratitude Journal</u>	This activity will help teach students to intentionally notice the positive elements in their day and to shift the balance towards optimism.
<u>Tense and Relax</u>	Help students develop the skills to notice how their body feels when they are tense and relaxed, and to learn how to relieve tension and to self-regulate.
<u>Self-Care 101</u>	Tips on how we can take care of ourselves.
<u>Weekend Plan</u>	An activity to allow students to plan and set aside some time for fun. Following through on a fun activity is an important element of self-care.

LISTEN

<u>Purposeful Listening</u>	Teaches students different ways that they can actively listen to each other, which helps foster empathy and compassion in the classroom.
<u>Listen Hear</u>	Teaches students to actively listen to each other, which helps them feel valued and understood.
<u>Paying Attention</u>	Helps students become better problem solvers and become better judges of what and how they learn.
<u>Active Constructive Listening</u>	Teaches students to actively listen to each other, in order to enhance social skills, help them feel valued and understood, and foster relationships.

School Mental Health Ontario



RESPECT

<u>Creating Collaborative Classroom Norms</u>	To establish norms as a group and to identify what matters to students as a group/classroom.
<u>The Kindness Jar</u>	To encourage kindness and respect in the classroom.
<u>That's Me</u>	To improve group cohesion in the classroom.
<u>Did You Know?</u>	To help students identify important aspects of themselves, practice sharing parts of their identity with classmates, and see the value in uniqueness and diversity.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

<u>Six Ways to Practise Self-Care</u>	A resource to help youth discover healthy ways to cope with challenges and stress in their lives.
<u>Bell Let's Talk Toolkit</u>	Resources to help start the conversation about mental health and ways to help show support.
<u>How to Practice Self-Care</u>	Tips on how to practice self-care every day from Kids Help Phone.
<u>35 Self-Care Tips from People Like You! Ideas for Self-Care</u>	Suggestions for new ways to practice self-care in your daily life from Kids Help Phone.



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CONCLUSION TO THE SEEDS TO GROW MENTAL HEALTH SERIES

This newsletter is the last volume of the Seeds to Grow Your Mental Health Newsletter series. The series was created to provide tools for educators and students to identify and manage their emotions and better handle stressful situations. The newsletters discuss a variety of skills and activities that can be used in the classroom to continue the conversation and practice the skills.

If you would like to review the full series of the Seeds to Grow Your Mental Health Newsletters, they can be found on our [website](#).