



# TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

## Overview

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This curriculum is a series of interactive activities paired with the documentaries *Angst*, *LIKE*, and *The Upstanders*. In line with the mission of David Legacy's Foundation, the curriculum aims to support healthy habits and interactions among young people online.

Partaking in these structured conversations aims to open up lines of communication among parents, caregivers, and their children, as well as within classrooms, about the challenges of digital life. Activities in this series are designed to combat the mental health impact of cyberbullying on young people and advocate for inclusive and compassionate peer relationships.

While some of the curricula can be done independently, many activities require a facilitator. A facilitator is a person who will thoughtfully guide participants through conversations and activities. Facilitators can be parents, caregivers, community elders, classroom teachers, program leaders, among other roles.

The following are a series of best practices on sensitively facilitating conversations with young people on their feelings and, ultimately, to cultivate empathy and meaningful action. The practices are drawn from research in the field of social-emotional learning and trauma-informed pedagogy.

## Disclaimer

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These activities address young people's lived experiences and feelings. So, before starting any activity, the facilitator should encourage participants to share personal information at their own comfort level and discretion. If at any time there are concerns about the well-being of a participant, feel free to discontinue the activity.



## Best Practices

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### Relationships are Key

Building strong relationships is at the core of any successful social-emotional learning. Ensure comfortable, welcoming spaces for participants. Arrange furniture and seating so that participants will face each other and maximize facetime. If you don't have a preexisting relationship, make sure that there are name tags available or protocols for learning names. Warmly greet participants by their preferred names as they enter into the room. Cultivate peer interactions by giving plenty of time for participants to share their ideas and creations in small groups and pairs.

### Provide Safety and Structure

Spend time discussing what it means to feel safe and listened to (see our activity on "What Does It Mean to Listen?"). Preview any activities or agendas with participants, so they know what to expect during the session. Make sure that participants know that any sharing is completely voluntary. Offer times and suggestions for taking a break if needed, either by taking a walk for fresh air, getting a drink of water, going to a special area in the room with books and tactile objects, or integrating a snack time. Build confidence in participants by intentionally sequencing activities: Do low-stake sharing (such as a word) first and, over time, shift to higher-stake sharing (sharing a story or experience).

### Be Flexible and Compassionate

Facilitators should be prepared for unexpected responses and not presume that outward behavior is always indicative of what is happening inside. Acknowledge feelings with affirming statements, such as, "I see that you are angry" or "I understand why you might be sad." Read the energy of the room and be purposive about mixing high-energy activities with lots of self-paced, individual learning. Be flexible about the pacing of sessions, prioritizing the relationship with the participant over the completion of tasks or activities.

### Reduce Anxiety

Integrate strategies for self-monitoring feelings, such as simple breathing techniques (See the activity on "Taking Breaths, Slowing Down"). Offer feeling charts and sentence starters for participants to express their emotions. Also, suggest non-verbal ways for expression, including drawing and journals (see the activity on "Processing Our Feelings Through Comics Cubes").



### Boost Self-Efficacy and Hope

Allow participants the room to step out of an activity and take a break. Bolter agency by giving participants choices in how to interact and show their learning. End sessions with plenty of time for sharing a positive reflection or area for growth. Encourage participants to say something positive that they learned from another participant. Include closure statements or exit cards like, "Something I learned today..." or "I really like what [insert name] had to say today...."

### For More Information

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The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). "SEL Three Signature Practices Playbook." <https://casel.org/sel-3-signature-practices/>

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). "What is SEL?" <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

Minahan, Jessica. "Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies." *Educational Leadership*, October 2019.

[http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational\\_leadership/oct19/vol77/num02/Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/oct19/vol77/num02/Trauma-Informed_Teaching_Strategies.aspx)

Teaching Tolerance. "A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Through Coronavirus." March 23, 2020.

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-teaching-through-coronavirus>