



FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Ideas with

# IMPACT

RESILIENCY

## Creating a Conscious Classroom

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## Creating a Conscious Classroom

### Curriculum Guide

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**"An unexamined life is not worth living" - Socrates**

## Acknowledgements

This workshop is based on the premise that life does not have to be a struggle. Happiness is a conscious choice. We can learn to be happy. Creating a happy, resilient classroom is easier than we think if we are open to receive and willing to make changes to release our negativity and transform our toxic environments by simply examining our thoughts and actions. Spoiler alert: the results are miraculous! You will experience a newfound sense of purpose and passion to create loving connections and ignite creativity in your classes.

I am very grateful to all the changemakers creating powerful paradigm shifts in education for the mental and physical wellbeing of children. One source of inspiration for this idea is Dr. Becky Baily, the creator of *Conscious Discipline Building Resilient Classrooms* and recognized expert in childhood education. Another source at the forefront of the wellness movement is the amazing, Dr. Llana Nankin, creator, and founder of *Breath for Change*, offering yoga, social emotional learning, and mindfulness training for educators. My intention is to help you to get on board the wellness train and make a conscious effort to do things differently, to practice self-care, to be kind to your mind, to learn strategies to manage stress and reduce anxiety, and to share these proven techniques with your students and school community.



## Overview

**Creating a conscious classroom** will equip students with self-awareness and self-management strategies to build their inner strength capacity and develop a growth mindset --a core skill of resiliency. By utilizing healthy coping mechanisms, students will learn that we cannot control outside forces, but we can control our reactions to external experiences. Challenging traditional classroom management paradigms based on fear, punishment, and rewards, conscious educators lead with love and compassion using innovative, evidenced based approaches and mindfulness research to invoke a new vision for cultivating a resilient classroom where connection and a sense of belonging is the best motivator for learning and growth. Students will learn the powerful lesson that we create the peace that surrounds us by tuning into awareness, then making a conscious choice to change or not to change. They will be surprised to discover the scientific fact--happiness can be learned. We can learn to make the pursuit of happiness a daily habit by understanding that the source of all joy is within us. We can choose to be miserable, or choose to live with ease, living a pleasant life no matter the circumstances. There is always something to smile about and be grateful for. Well documented studies show that "consciously" practicing gratitude, kindness, positivity, and presence can have a profound effect on our mental and physical wellbeing. By learning to observe our thoughts and tune into our bodies, students will gain the knowledge and experience to identify and manage emotions, building resiliency and clearing neuropathways for creativity and curiosity to flow.

## Florida B.E.S.T. Standards

HE.912.R.1.1. Demonstrate effective and respectful communication skills and strategies.

HE.912.R.1.2. Demonstrate empathy in variety of contexts and situations.

HE.912.R.1.3. Adjust behavior to respect the needs of others.

HE.912.R.4.2. Generate and apply alternative solutions when solving problems or resolving conflict.

HE.912.R.2.2. Analyze different perspectives to inform responsible decision-making.

HE.912.R.2.6 Analyze how actions and reactions can influence one to respond in different situations.

HE.912.C.1.2. Interpret the significance of interrelationships in mental/emotional, physical, and social health.



## Lesson Activities

**Creating a conscious classroom** begins with awareness because we can't change what we don't know. "Conscious" is a state of active, open attention in the present moment. Without conscious awareness, our ability to change old- conditioned discipline practices to effective new practices are impaired; consequently, we live our lives on autopilot.

Through awareness, we learn to recognize those unconscious patterns blocking our happiness and learn to form new, healthier routines and connections in our classrooms. Creating a conscious classroom is all about noticing our own "adult" habits that are keeping us stuck, stressed, and sick and making a conscious choice to "willingly" change and transform the way we teach and live our daily lives.

Getting started is as simple as establishing morning routines with a few affirmations or mindfulness strategies (see Resources). The goal is to set the intention to make your conscious classroom a fun, happy place where students feel valued and can express their voice. In fact, teachers can turn Fridays into Flow Fridays to wind down from a demanding academic week in playful ways using mindful games, art, poems, songs, movement, skits, etc. During Flow Friday's, class teams work together on the Resilient Skill of the Month. If Kindness is the theme, the Friday class flow starts with a loving kindness practice to set the mood and tone. Then, groups brainstorm ways to demonstrate kindness through interactive projects.

Here are 4 powerful and proven ways to help build a conscious, stress-free classroom where student engagement and relationships flourish:

### Activity 1: Getting to Know Your 3 Brains

***In this activity, students will learn to identify the 3 main parts of the brain and explain the low and elevated states of being through illustrations. They will apply the Power of Attention and Skill of Composure.***

***Students will:***

- 1) Discover how their brain works using the Hand Model
- 2) Learn to observe and regulate positive and negative thoughts
- 3) Learn healthy coping strategies to build attention and composure

**Materials:**

Chart or Poster paper for Anchor Charts  
 Assorted Colored Markers  
 Video-The Hand Model of the Brain (2:02)

Approximate Time: 15 min

**Procedures:**

**Before:** Students watch a kid- friendly video illustrating the parts of the brain using the Hand Model; after the video, the teacher guides students to practice making the Hand Model of the Brain and "flipping the lid" with their own hands. As students' gesture with their hands, the teacher guides a visualization of each brain part. (See example in Resources)

**During:** Given chart or poster paper, students illustrate the 3 parts of the brain and highlight key features of each part; students present their colorful illustrations and explain the lower and elevated states of the brain with examples:

**(Brain Stem)-** Flight of Fight, Hit, Punch, Scream, Hide, Run Away - (Am I safe?)

**(Lymbic or Emotional Brain)-** Calling names, excluding others- I don't like him/her, racism, neediness, clingingness, when things don't go our way, blaming others (Am I loved?)

**(Cortex or Thinking Brain)-**Wisdom (the wisest part of us), how can I see the problem from different perspectives, how can I solve the problem, how can I learn from this challenge? The ability to set goals and achieve them, own our mistakes, and make good choices (What can I learn from this?)

**After:** Invite students to practice regulating their emotions by pausing and focusing their attention on their breath to avoid "flipping their lid"; introduce the S.T.A.R. Breathing Method (S.T.A.R. -Smile, Take a Deep Breath, And Release) or any mindfulness strategy of choice to practice calming and relaxing the mind- Repeat 3-5 times (Invite students to be in charge of their brain states. Practice observing thoughts and switching from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Say: It's your brain, you're in charge of it! One thing we can control more than anything is our thoughts. Our low or high states of being or consciousness determine how we learn things. We learn better when we practice being confident, grateful, compassionate, kind, loving and joyful).

**Exit Ticket:** Students visualize their future self and write a kind note of encouragement which they can also illustrate to display in the classroom

## Activity 2: Learning to Respond vs. React

**Conscious classrooms** empower students to recognize they have choices to change situations and resolve conflicts by responding with nonviolent, mindful approaches. When they are faced with challenging social situations, they learn to be more intentional and use more positive and effective communication. They learn to set boundaries without being confrontational. They understand they don't have to respond in an impulsive, reactionary way. Instead, they can pause, breathe, reflect, and react with peaceful communication (Accessing their higher brain state). They also understand that to be kind does not mean to be weak.

**In this activity, Students will apply the Power of Assertiveness to increase respect for self and others.**

Students will:

- 1) Analyze how actions and reactions can influence one to respond in different situations
- 2) Demonstrate effective, respectful, nonviolent communication skills
- 3) Learn how to cultivate positive relationships with teachers and peers creating healthy boundaries with assertiveness vs. aggressiveness

### **Materials:**

Video- Ikea's The Bully Plant Experiment (2:18))

Approximate Time: 15-min (Two-day Lesson)

Day 1- Role Play

Day 2- Respond to Reflection questions on NVC worksheet or P.E.A.C.E. Strategy

### **Procedures:**

**Before:** Begin with practicing 3 Collective Breaths or engaging in a Two Word Check in (See Resources). As students settle in, the teacher introduces the Power of Assertiveness (contrasting assertiveness vs. aggressiveness); students discuss examples and non-examples of assertiveness;

Students watch the video, "The Bully Plant: An Experiment" and share their reactions to the experiment on the power of words.

**During:** The class makes one large circle or two concentric circles and leads various role-playing real-life scenarios where students are teased, don't like it, and need to respond. (i.e., "A group of your classmates has made up a nickname for you that they think is funny like "Shorty", but you don't like it. You have asked them to stop using it, but they keep doing it anyway.", or a friend teases you about being fat, and you don't like it, but he/she keeps doing it anyway); Students brainstorm other real-life examples and discuss when teasing can lead to bullying...

**After:** The teacher introduces the PEACE Process or Nonviolent Communication (NVC); Using the Think-Pair-Write- Share, students respond to the reflection questions on the NVC guided practice worksheet and practice the Power of Assertiveness with a partner using nonviolent communication by expressing their feelings, needs and request (When you say\_\_\_\_\_, I don't like it. It makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_. Because I value \_\_\_\_\_, would you be willing to stop \_\_\_\_\_?)

**Exit Ticket:** What did you notice? Oral Discussion

What was it like to identify the facts of the situation without judgment?

What was it like to consider the specific emotions you experienced?

What was it like to acknowledge your needs and values?

What was it like to create a specific, tangible request for the other person?

Do you plan to have a conversation with the person you had a conflict with?

## Why do people find value in learning NVC?

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Most of us are hungry for skills that can improve the quality of our relationships, to deepen our sense of personal empowerment or simply help us communicate more effectively. Unfortunately, most of us have been educated from birth to compete, judge, demand and diagnose; to think and communicate in terms of what is “right” and “wrong” with people. At best, the habitual ways we think and speak hinder communication and create misunderstanding and frustration. And still worse, they can cause anger and pain, and may lead to violence. Without wanting to, even people with the best of intentions generate needless conflict.

NVC helps us reach beneath the surface and discover what is alive and vital within us, and how all of our actions are based on human needs that we are seeking to meet. We learn to develop a vocabulary of feelings and needs that helps us more clearly express what is going on in us, and understand what is going on in others, at any given moment. When we understand and acknowledge our needs, we develop a shared foundation for much more satisfying relationships. Join the thousands of people worldwide who have improved their relationships and their lives with this simple yet revolutionary process.

**Marshall Rosenberg provides us with the most effective tools to foster health and relationships. Nonviolent Communication connects soul to soul . . . It is the missing element in what we do.”**

- Deepak Chopra, author,  
How to Know God and Ageless Body, Timeless Mind

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### Conflict Resolution

Resolve conflicts peacefully—personal or public, domestic, or international

- Get to the heart of conflict and disputes quickly
- Improve cooperation—listen so others are really heard
- Transform criticism and blame into compassionate connection
- Prevent future pain and misunderstanding
- Strengthen students’ interest, retention and connection to their work
- Improve safety, trust and connection in your classroom
- Improve classroom teamwork, efficiency and cooperation •  
Strengthen classroom and teacher-parent relationships

### Personal Relationships

- Deepen your emotional connections
- Transform judgment and criticism into understanding and connection
- Listen so others are really heard
- Get what you want more often without using demands, guilt or shame
- Hear the needs behind whatever anyone does or says

### Parenting and Families

- Reduce family conflicts and sibling rivalry
- Move beyond power struggles to cooperation and trust
- Create a quality of connection that embodies unconditional love
- Protect and nurture the autonomy of children
- Motivate using “power-with” rather than “power-over” strategies

### Education and Schools

- Maximize the individual potential of all students

## How You Can Use the NVC Process



Clearly expressing  
how **I am**  
without blaming  
or criticizing

Empathically receiving  
how **you are**  
without hearing  
blame or criticism

1. What I observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:

“When I (see, hear) . . . ”

1. What you observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:

“When you see/hear . . . ”

*(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)*

### FEELINGS

2. How I feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what I observe:

“I feel . . . ”

2. How you feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what you observe:

“You feel . . . ”

### NEEDS

3. What I need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes my feelings:

“ . . . because I need/value . . . ”

3. What you need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes your feelings:

“ . . . because you need/value . . . ”

Clearly requesting that  
which would enrich **my**  
life without demanding

Empathically receiving that  
which would enrich **your** life  
without hearing any demand

### REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:

“Would you be willing to . . . ?”

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:

“Would you like . . . ?”

*(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)*



### Activity 3: Leading with Love (All Hearts on Deck)

**Creating a conscious classroom** means becoming the change we want to see in the world and allowing the magical power of love to melt away anger, resentment, ego, fear, and fixed mindsets; allowing gratitude, compassion, kindness, positivity, and growth mindsets to activate our thinking brain or higher states of consciousness. It is our willingness to examine and move beyond the lower brain states that will set us free to experience lasting happiness in our classroom and beyond. With deliberate practice of elevated brain states (gratitude, compassion, kindness, positivity, love), we connect to our hearts, build a caring community and sense of belonging, and creating a state of peace and calm even amid chaos.

**In this activity, students will learn the Power of Love and Encouragement and take an active role in elevating the consciousness of the classroom by creating a caring and kind environment.**

#### **Students will:**

- 1) Demonstrate kindness and gratitude in different contexts
- 2) Learn how to cultivate positive relationships with teachers and peers showing kindness, caring, and helpfulness
- 3) Make mind and body connections to elevated brain states

**Materials:** Assorted Color Post-It Notes, Wishing Well Corner, Kindness Group Circle

Approximate Time: 15- minutes

#### **Procedures:**

**Before:** Begin with a grounding mindfulness exercise (5-4-3-2-1) to become 100% in the present moment (See Resources) then start the class with a "Wishing Well" or Loving Kindness Circle extending peace and kindness to ourselves, our loved ones, our school family, and the world...Say: May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be full of kindness and peace (students repeat with their inner voice)

Next, picture someone dear to you and extend loving kindness wishes, say: May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be full of kindness and peace; Next, extend loving kindness to the school community and finally extend loving kind wishes to the world. (In Resources, Dr. Bailey, founder of Conscious Discipline, models the skill of wishing well and explains that is not a thought, it is bringing your focus to your heart, taking a deep breath, and allowing the energy to flow through your heart as you wish others well). After expressing good wishes, students observe and share and body sensations- Ask- What did you notice? Did you notice anything different in your body? Response: I feel good (Ask- What does good feel like in your body); the intention is to help students become diligent detectives or observers of their internal and external states.

**During:** Start a ripple effect of kindness, compassion, empathy, positivity, and gratitude. Have students create positive messages on post-it notes they have folded into hearts using the art of origami. After folding their hearts, they can drop it into a class "Positivity" jar or basket and keep adding notes until it's full. Students can pick a kind note from the jar and share the positive message with the class, or they can take one out when they've had a bad day to cheer up.

**After:** Create a wishing well corner to extend warm wishes to classmates, friends, family, or anyone at school in need of caring, positive vibes, or if they are absent from class; Post a caring heart note to the person in the wishing well corner.

**Exit Ticket:** Keep a caring heart note in your pocket to spread loving kindness around and share a positive message of appreciation or gratitude with someone you may or may not know

Click on the attached file or package to open the video file of this lesson: (no audio)



Lower 2 SEW  
Project.mp4

## Activity 4: Walk a Mile in My Shoes

Empathy is defined as “the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place”. In other words, to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. By tapping into the power of empathy we are able accept what is without judgement or bias, relaxing into the present moment and allowing others to be themselves. Instead of blaming or wondering what’s wrong with the student, we ask what happened to this student? When children reject our guidance and make poor choices, it is our job to offer them empathy (see things from a different perspective) to help them accept personal responsibility for their choices by managing their emotions instead of acting them out.

**In this activity, students will learn the Power of Empathy to increase compassion and nonjudgement of self and others.**

**Students will:**

- 1) Demonstrate empathy in different contexts
- 2) Analyze different perspectives to inform responsible decision making
- 3) Learn how to cultivate positive relationships with teachers and peers showing compassion and understanding of others differences

**Materials:**

Video: TOO QUICK TO JUDGE

Walk a Mile in My Shoes – WS

**Procedures:**

**This is a 2- Day Lesson**

**Day 1-Watch video and discuss Empathy**

**Day 2-Respond to reflections questions and illustrate shoes**

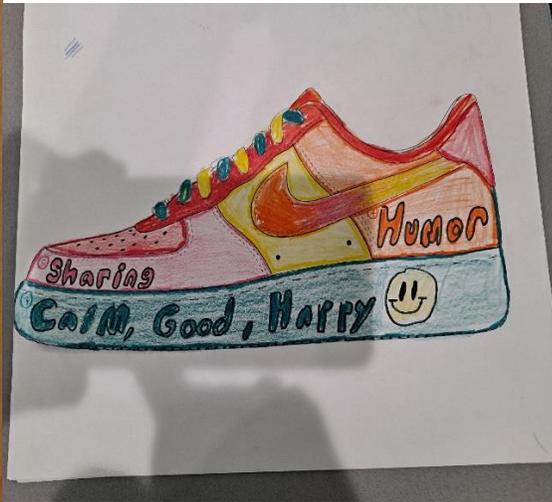
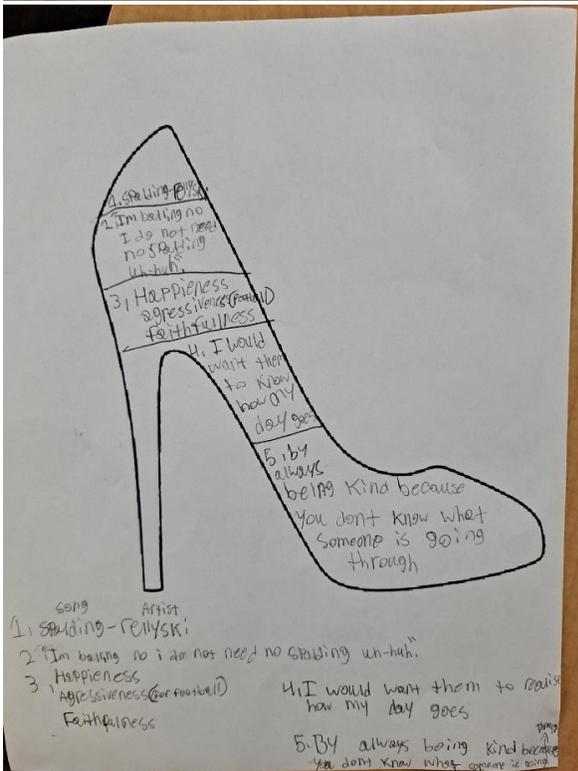
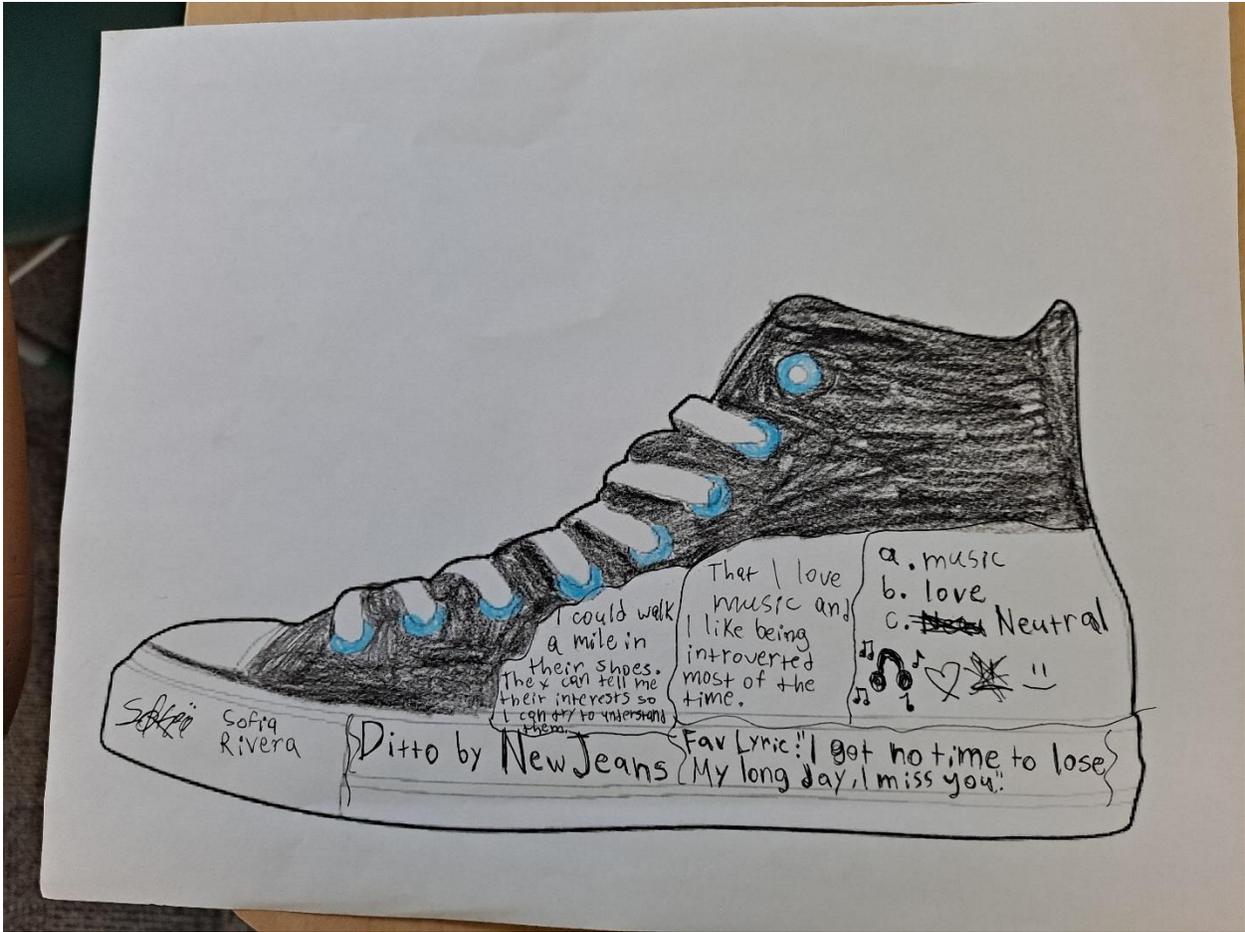
**Before:** Watch a short film about empathy which shows how we never know what someone else might be going through so we must not be too quick to judge. Ask: How can we be less judgmental? Start a discussion, then introduce the Power of Empathy.

**During:** Read and respond to questions on the worksheet

**After:** Illustrate shoe responses and share with peers

**Exit Ticket:** How can we show empathy?

# Walk a Mile in My Shoes



## Resources

**PEACE PROCESS/NVC Worksheet** (© 2005 by Center for Nonviolent Communication | Website: [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org) | Email: [cnvc@cnvc.org](mailto:cnvc@cnvc.org) | Phone: +1.505.244.4041 ); helps students become more aware of their emotions and needs and expand their vocabulary with the feelings inventory

### Videos:

The Hand Model (2:02)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kx7PCzgOCGE>

Bully Plant (2:18)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yx6UgfQreYY&t=5s>

Too Quick to Judge- Empathy

- [https://youtu.be/Fzn\\_AKN67oI](https://youtu.be/Fzn_AKN67oI)

### Origami Post-It Note Hearts

- <https://youtu.be/rVrUdMLPU6Y>



You are appreciated!

You are loved!

You got this!

You can, You will!

You are a champion!

You are powerful!

### Conscious Discipline- (ConsciousDiscipline.com)

Book-Conscious Discipline Building a Resilient Classroom  
-Dr. Becky Bailey

Wishing Well -Video Modeling (2:08)

[https://youtu.be/O81uhCobl\\_A](https://youtu.be/O81uhCobl_A)

Dr. Bailey demonstrates the Brain Hand Model

<https://youtu.be/m8L8MMrRkGQ>

Wishing Well adaptations for lower grades:

[https://youtube.com/shorts/BI1l\\_vPc9\\_Q?feature=share](https://youtube.com/shorts/BI1l_vPc9_Q?feature=share)

## Mindfulness Strategies



## Breathe for Change

Two- Word Check In

<https://youtube.com/shorts/iFhtWGblc18?feature=share>

3 Collective Breaths

<https://youtube.com/shorts/mBqzUktaME8?feature=share>



4. If someone else were to walk a mile in your shoes, what would you want them to know about you to better understand what makes YOU you?

5. How can you show empathy to someone else? How can you show them you understand their emotions?



