

PILLAR TWO: COMMUNITY

Notes:

Community Pillar Unit Summary

Community-building practices based on cutting-edge positive psychology research allow us to *bring out the best in each other by bringing out the best in ourselves*. In the Community Pillar, we use the concept of the selfless service to cultivate strong value systems related to individual and collective development, growth, and self-awareness. Using our community-building tools, we cultivate cooperation, care-taking, compassion, generosity, civic duty, selflessness, and other positive values within our classroom environments. By working together, we begin to support each other's wellbeing goals and at the same time hold ourselves responsible for contributing to the wellbeing of the group. When we commit to feeling well as a group, our chances of personal growth increases because we want to contribute to the collective. The Wellbeing Community pillar provides lessons and skills for bringing out the best in ourselves, so that we can bring out the best in each other.

For tens of thousands of generations, humans have thrived through developing incredible capacities to work collaboratively and flourish as a group. By working together and using evidence-based community practices, we learn how to directly enhance our empathy, trust, cooperation, gratitude, forgiveness, and altruistic skills - among many others.

The Wellness Buddies tool will be the anchor practice for building an understanding of Wellbeing Community. This includes ways that prosocial behaviors and cooperation can apply to our lives to cultivate a sense of togetherness as we work to help each other feel well. The purpose of this pillar is to create a sense of cooperation, caring, and love within our classroom environments. The Wellbeing Community pillar provides lessons, strategies, and skills for generating compassion, prosocial behavior, and gratitude between members of a group – which can be as small as two students or as large as an entire grade level. Understanding, recognizing, and regulating the emotions of our communities allows us to maximize the potential for empathy, compassion, gratitude, and other foundational wellbeing-building practices.

Ultimately, the Community Pillar progresses beyond our small classroom and school groups. The skills that we learn in this pillar (e.g., gratitude, forgiveness, altruism, compassion, etc.) eventually extend to our greater social systems, nation, and planet. The importance of Community cannot be understated, as the topics covered herein are what help build strong, cooperative, and compassionate societies. By having a regular practice of Wellbeing Community, and an understanding of the science behind the practice, students will be able to use the Wellness Buddies tool to give them a sense of collective support around their wellbeing goals. They will be able to practice strategies to bring out the best in others, manage conflicts, and use prosocial skills to support regulating the emotions of others. All of these are key outcomes to generating enhanced understanding and regulation of our emotions, and long-term psychological and physical wellbeing.

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ESTABLISHED GOALS (US SCHOOLS ONLY)

SEL Standard (Illinois State) Develop self-awareness and self-management (self-regulation) skills to achieve school and life success. This unit of study will target the core competencies for SEL (outlined by CASEL) of self-awareness and self-management.

IDENTIFIER (US ONLY)

Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.

STANDARD (US ONLY)

Early Elementary:

- Recognize that others may experience situations differently from oneself.
- Use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.

Late Elementary:

- Describe the expressed feelings and perspectives of others.
- Identify verbal, physical, and situational cues that indicate how others may feel.

Middle:

- Predict others' feelings and perspectives in a variety of situations.
- Analyze how one's behavior may affect others.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS (EUS): STUDENTS WILL KNOW THAT...

1. Wellbeing is greatly enhanced by cultivating strong, healthy, selfless service-oriented relationships with their classmates, teachers, friends, and families.
2. One of the most important aspects of the survival of our species has been the cultivation of collaboration and prosocial behavior.
3. We can engage in altruistic, empathic, and compassionate behaviors to promote wellbeing in the self and other.
4. We pay attention to and honor the wellbeing goals of others, and we support the people around us in feeling well by using the Wellness Buddies Tool.
5. We generate compassionate feelings for another by recognizing and understanding their emotions, and then desiring the best possible outcome for them.
6. We cultivate trust and collaboration in everyday life by showing/receiving gratitude, offering forgiveness, and relating to one another with loving kindness.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS (EQS):

1. How can we build a community that enhances the wellbeing of the group?
2. How can we generate empathy and compassion to one another in everyday life?
3. What are the effective strategies to manage our emotions and the emotions of others?
4. Why does working together help us cultivate more wellbeing than working alone?
5. How can we use gratitude to appreciate others, and allow others to appreciate us?
6. What are the ways that we can cultivate trust and collaboration to improve the wellbeing of our group?

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MISCONCEPTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS	
Misconception	Clarification
The main purpose of Wellbeing Community is to get better at working in groups.	While many people who practice the Wellbeing Community skills become more skilled creating harmonious groups, this is secondary to the main purpose. The main purpose of this pillar is to use the energy of selfless service to amplify all of our wellbeing practices across all pillars.
Wellbeing Community is about making others feel good and solving all of their problems.	Wellbeing Community skills like compassion, altruism, and empathy can be useful for maintaining presence and clarity during challenging situations, but it is unhealthy to expect that we must always fix others' problems. The best support that you can offer others is to give them enough space and compassion so that they can learn from their challenges.
Wellbeing Community is about having others make me feel good and solve all of my problems.	Wellbeing Communities can be there to support you in times of challenge, but in the end it is nobody's responsibility to solve a personal problem but yourself. This is the best way to learn and grow through all of life's ups and downs. Empowering students to become inspired to serve their wellbeing communities without expecting anything in return is the highest practice here.
Selfless service through my Wellbeing Community means ignoring my needs.	Selfless service provides us the opportunity to drop our expectations and give to others the love that is already inside of us. When we fall out of balance, we use our Wellbeing Community to inspire us into balance again. Healthy communities are made of healthy individuals, and so the individual wellbeing must come first before you can take care of others effectively.

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KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Knowledge - Students Will Know:

- We can feel greater wellbeing when we work together to support each other's wellbeing goals, as opposed to working alone.
- We support each other's wellbeing goals by using the Wellness Buddies Tool.
- We generate compassion for others by paying attention to their emotions and wanting the best for them.
- By bringing out the best characteristics in others, we can bring out the best characteristics in ourselves.
- We practice loving kindness toward people who are easy to get along with, and people who are not easy to get along with.
- We cultivate feelings of trust with one another to support our wellbeing goals, and we work to protect that trust.

Skills - Students Will Know How To:

- Identify the emotions/situations that they try to avoid.
- Explain why community is an important component to wellbeing.
- Explain what prosocial behaviors are, and why they have been important for the survival of our species.
- Practice empathy and generate compassion with their classmates and teachers.
- Using the Wellness Buddies Tool to cultivate a classroom climate that supports everyone's wellbeing goals.
- Use loving kindness to strengthen bonds with friends, and make it easier to resolve conflicts in challenging situations.
- Listen to others compassionately and openly without judging them.
- Build trust and collaboration with their Wellness Buddies group in order to support the wellbeing goals of the team.
- Show and receive genuine gratitude with openness and intention.
- Resolve conflict with forgiveness.

PERFORMANCE TASK SUMMARY (USING GRASPS)

Students will identify the ways that they can support and contribute to a healthy, thriving community at school and at home. They will apply the Wellness Buddies tool to grow healthier relationships with everyone around them. Examples can be similar to the following:

1. Keep track of progress in managing conflicts with compassion and forgiveness.
2. Keep track of progress in supporting Wellness Buddies in being the best they can be.
3. Playing with the strategies from the Wellbeing Community pillar during/after experiencing an unpleasant situation with others.
4. Speaking to others in a way that communicates trust, gratitude, and compassion.
5. Speaking to yourself in a way that helps contribute to the wellbeing of the group. 

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PERFORMANCE TASK SUMMARY (USING GRASPS) (Cont.)

6. Becoming more comfortable fully receiving praise and gratitude from others.
7. Using the Wellness Buddies tool as an opportunity to learn about goals of others, their similarities to your goals, and how you can support them.

Students will meet with their Wellness Buddies to discuss how it's going. Ultimately, students can create a piece of evidence that explains how their Wellness Buddies helped them grow. This could be through writing, art, or any other creative expressions.

Community Pillar Assessment Evidence

OTHER EVIDENCE OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING	
Other Assessments	Knowledge and Skills
Turn and Talk	Have students consistently turn and talk about their use or lack of use of these strategies in their day-to-day experience. This will be utilized in each of the individual lessons and then shared with the whole group.
Lesson Reflections in Journal	Daily Reflections that answer questions in each lesson.
Pre/ Post Assessment	Before teaching Wellbeing Community to students, ask them to rate how supported they feel in their lives. Ask them to discuss what wellbeing means to them, and how they might work together to help each other thrive in our wellbeing goals. At the end of the unit, give them the same rating task and see how their answers have changed.
Home Log	Students keep track of Wellbeing Community practice at home and bring home the takeaways from the empathy, compassion, or trust lessons. Students write about how they feel before and after the Wellness Buddies practice.
Class Project	The class will choose a project to produce an act of selfless service.

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Community Learning Plan — Activities

EXAMPLES

How do you think we, as a group, could help each other feel well each day? What kinds of behaviors or ideas are the most effective ways to generate wellbeing in a group setting? Have a discussion around what students like or dislike about certain group dynamics. Make a list of the classroom wellbeing attributes most cherished by students.

Ask students how they would feel if you had a special way to teach them how to connect with each other to support everyone’s wellbeing goals. Ask students if they would be interested in learning how to treat each other with empathy, compassion, kindness, and gratitude.

Community Learning Plan — Lesson Overview

Ten Lessons are provided with this pillar. These ten lessons move through the very basic fundamentals of developing a personal Mindful Breathing practice. We begin with finding a mindful posture, learn how to find the breath, and then move into thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. We then learn more advanced practices like nonjudgmental noticing, self-kindness, and letting go of all distractions. Finally, Mindful Breathing advances into a practice that can be applied to everyday life, even when walking, moving, talking, or doing any activity.

Be sure to reteach any of the lessons at any time based on student needs. Some lessons may need more time, and others less. In general, they are meant to take around 30 minutes.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Introduction to Wellbeing Community: The Science of Prosocial Behavior	What is Altruism?	Generating Empathy	Generating Compassion	Compassionate Listening and Validating
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Wellness Buddies Core Tool	Loving Kindness	Showing and Receiving Gratitude	Trust and Collaboration	Selfless Service in Everyday Life