

PEACE KIDS

TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE



Developed

By

S•W•●•V•A

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Welcome To the Peace Kids Program!

"If a child is to keep alive an inborn sense of wonder, s/he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with the child the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in." - Rachel Carson

Thank you for your commitment to working with children and supporting community health and safety as an elementary or middle school teacher and mentor. We are excited to have you join us in an exciting and powerful global movement of peace! These workshops are SWOVA's way of contributing to a legacy of social justice education and research. We have created this teachers' guidebook as an additional resource for you during and after Peace Kids workshop delivery. We know that teachers are the people with whom many children spend the majority of their time. Our curricula is informed by the skills and knowledge of teachers in School District 64 (Southern Gulf Islands) and we hope our guidebook will offer additional resources to you to support your everyday classroom work experience.

History

For the past 13 years over 10,000 youth in B.C. in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 have participated in SWOVA's Respectful Relationships (R+R) program. This program has been cited as a good practice program in youth violence prevention by the United Nations. Many parents, young people and other community professionals who work within the prevention field, have asked us to begin working with younger children to address the bullying and systemic violence that is occurring in elementary and middle school communities.

As a sister project to the R+R program, Peace Kids examines violence as a systemic issue, understanding that the prevailing culture in our world continues to perpetuate a belief that violence solves problems. Peace Kids explores issues of sexism, racism and homophobia as they intersect, and contribute to systemic violence throughout the world and in our community. We do this with children by exploring five key concepts: affirmation, gratitude, empathy, cooperation and conflict resolution.

At the heart of our program is the belief that these foundational human qualities are the basis for personal health, safety and well-being. When we support children to respect differences and embrace diversity, we contribute to a world in which racism, sexism and homophobia are thwarted by the power of peace, compassion and understanding. The curricula attempts to create real examples of ways that students can be a part of breaking down systemic violence, by fostering Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), through skills such as empathy and critical inquiry.

Fifteen years of research at SWOVA indicates that the younger students are when they receive preventive education and skill-building opportunities, the stronger, longer lasting and more formative the effects will be on their well-being, health and peaceful relating to others.



Our twelve session Peace Kids curricula seeks to:

- Empower children to live peacefully and respond to violence appropriately
- Develop awareness and build skills in the area of social and emotional intelligence and community responsibility
- Build a peaceful community where respect is cultivated
- Help children learn awareness and social skills around diversity and empathy
- Create awareness of places to access community support and guidance
- Reduce crime and victimization primarily using crime prevention through social development (CPSD) approach
- Reduce incidences of bullying among elementary school students
- Increase health and safety of elementary school students



Social & Emotional Learning



Source: The Casel group – an American organization focusing on SEL,
<http://www.casel.org>

Students learn a great deal in schools, much of which is not in the stated curriculum objectives. This is known as the hidden curriculum and much of it is not about a safe and open classroom space.

"The hidden curriculum consists of those things pupils learn through the experience of attending school rather than the stated educational objectives of such institutions"

(Michael Haralambos *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, 1991)

Usually with negative connotations, the hidden curriculum includes social inequalities, classism, racism, sexism, and even homophobia and heteronormativity. They are evidenced by high rates of bullying in schools, including physical violence, sexualized violence and harassment, and verbal abuse. This system of education does not actively oppose oppression and violence, which students may themselves be participants in, and therefore, we can assume that if an educational system is not part of eradicating the problem, it is perpetuating it by being a by-stander. Transformation can be achieved through creating a safe and open classroom space, and is something every educator can do, and of course many are already doing. We acknowledge we are on our own journey in terms of learning, do not have all of the answers, and can learn much from both educators and students about respect and community building. We welcome the opportunity to open the dialogue with you.

This learning and creation of safe spaces can also be seen as the hidden curriculum. It includes social messaging students receive about their inherent self-worth as human beings, respect, an emphasis on cooperation, empathy, emotional intelligence, communication and SEL. There are so many things that you are already doing everyday as teachers that can re-enforce positive social learning, safe and caring classroom space. These things help to shape students into even more amazing human beings. Many of these things can be achieved through SEL. So what is SEL?

The CASEL group, defines SEL as: "The processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions."

<http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning>

There are five core components to SEL learning, based on the work of CASEL.

Self-Awareness: Being aware of what we are feeling and thinking is a critical component of SEL. In doing so, we can in effect become more emotionally intelligent and expressive of what we need. As CASEL notes, being self-aware can increase one's ability to be effective in life: "This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism." For example, if I am feeling uncertain and fearful about something, and it is affecting my state of being, and I communicate to a co-worker that I may not as a result of feeling this way be operating at an optimal capacity, I may in effect become more relaxed and reassured, confident and optimistic as a result of my co-workers support. There are of course ways that educators can assist students to become self-aware, including modeling the attribute, and creating a classroom where students feel safe. This will be elaborated upon in subsequent activities.

Self-Management: This includes being able to control our emotions, thoughts and behaviours on a consistent basis to better meet our own needs and goals in life. This can actually help to better control our stress levels, of which 95% of illnesses are attributed to in North America. By being aware of and articulating what we feel, in effect we can as individuals, more aptly engage in dialogue with ourselves about feelings and move through them. This can lead to an ability to control impulses, especially lashing out in anger at people. While anger is a normal and even arguably healthy emotion, it is not if it is used in a harmful way to communicate with people. By recognizing that we are feeling angry, we may be able to take a step back, understand that anger may in fact be a mask for other emotions, and get in touch with the other emotions more easily. By modeling this form of self-regulation to students, we can in effect demonstrate the positive effects of this form of emotional intelligence.

Social Awareness: Perhaps one of the most important methods of being socially aware is to practice empathy. This means that we are willing to step into the shoes of another person, and try to understand what they are feeling. In doing so, we can demonstrate to others that we have social awareness. In terms of practicing peacebuilding education, this is a critical component of all of our work. Although the parts of children's brains which fully develop to be able to practice empathy, may not be engaged until adolescence, we can model the practice of empathy and they can begin to learn about the positive

benefits with simple questions such as “how do you think that Jane/John feels when they experience X?” Another core aspect of social awareness involves knowing where resources and supports can be found in our communities. As educational practitioners it is a core principle that we know where to refer students if they are experiencing difficulties in their lives. Knowing our limitations, because we are not counselors, is part of self-awareness. Knowing when a student needs supports beyond that which we can offer, and feeling comfortable to refer them when necessary is critical.

Relationship Skills: The development of healthy relationships is a core part of SEL. Yet when we think back to our schooling, was there ever an attempt by educators to do formal teaching around this skill? Likely not is the answer most adults in this day and age arrive at. However, we can encourage the growth of positive and beneficial relationships amongst students. As CASEL, notes this encompasses “...communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.” One might think given how societies have evolved and spread across the world in the process of colonization, that success would be inherent in this area, but the reality is that relationship building is a complex, and often fractured process for most human beings. With divorce rates at nearly 50%, our ability to maintain healthy relationships over the long term is very much in question. The same can be true for peer relationships, especially at the crucial age marks of 12–14 years, when students are highly concerned with what their peers think. Educators play a critical role in modeling and encouraging healthy relationship development for students.

Responsible Decision-making: When the above components are in place, students and adults alike are in a place to make better choices that will enhance their social lives and relationships. People can make choices that at their core consider the impact on others, the safety of others, social norms and their own values. For example, if a student sees a friend engaging in self-harming activity such as cutting, what is the obligation of the friend to report the problem to an adult? If someone sees someone getting into a car about to drive while under the influence of drugs and or alcohol, what is the obligation to report the driver or take the keys away?

Ideas for Teachers

You can promote students' social and emotional learning by:

- Offering students opportunities for active play like stretching, singing or heart focused breathing practices. Some examples may be found at this link: <https://www.heartmath.org/free-services/articles-of-the-heart/heart-focused-breathing.html>
- Providing opportunities for non-competitive team activities that foster interconnectedness, and allow group intelligence to emerge (preparing food together, sharing a walk or working on a class jigsaw puzzle)
- Encouraging students' creativity with dance, art and painting
- As part of parent meetings, ask parents about the amount of time their children spend with technology and suggest "tech free days" during the week or on weekends
- Provide time and space for children to be alone, quiet and relaxed within a group setting
- Ask students to express gratitude each week as part of class check in
- Support students to consistently drink water throughout the day (this directly effects brain functioning). This link helps students calculate how much water they need for proper and optimal brain functioning: <http://nutrition.about.com/library/blwatercalculator.htm>
- Support young people to notice and value the natural living world around them.



SEL Activities for Students



Self-Management Activity for Students:

Two Stars and a Wish!

With your class, ask the following questions and create a colourful and creative poster that can be placed centrally in your classroom so all students can see:

What type of a classroom and learning environment do you want to create and experience while you are at school? Ask students to come up with adjectives. Provide a few examples such as: playful loving, supportive, patient and creative.

What are some active ways we can create this environment together? Give examples such as: pay attention to my own and others' feelings, practice listening to someone you may feel upset with, ask others, including the teacher, if they need help with anything.

At the end of each week take five minutes and ask children to self-reflect and practice self-management by completing the following in a journal or quietly with themselves:

Two stars for two things I did this week to contribute to our classroom being peaceful, creative and supportive.

A wish for something I might choose to do differently next time.

This is a wonderful way to support children to learn the value of being able to admit to being wrong, or making mistakes as a foundational SEL skill. As a teacher and adult you can model this as follows:

“A wish I have as your teacher is that next week I will practice _____” (possible answers include: slowing down and stretching my body when I feel tired or rushed, asking for help when I need it, sharing more of my silliness with you!).

This is a great activity to do as part of a staff team meeting, and to offer parents to use with their children at home.

Self-Awareness Activity for Students

Tap Tap – Who’s Our Leader?



This is a great activity to support children in understanding the concept of group intelligence and leadership. In most formalized Western education there is an unspoken belief that affects children’s learning.

“There is only one leader.”

For 15 years as part of the R+R Program, we have chosen a male and female facilitators model as part of a systemic choice to support young people in observing shared leadership between a man and a woman. We see individualized leadership models in all systems: education, political, social and economical. It may also be modeled within family dynamics and left unspoken as it relates to systemic oppression including sexism, racism and homophobia. This individual model prevents many people from shining as leaders.

- With your students, review the qualities of a leader that are valued by children in your classroom. Have each child write three qualities and write all offerings up for everyone to see.
- Ask students to stand in a circle and close their eyes. Let them know you are going to choose a leader based on your observations of them as a group. Ensure that all eyes remain closed and walk around the outer circle quietly tapping each and every student on their back. Walk the circle several times, to tap in a strategic way so that students will not guess all of them right away.
- Ask students to open their eyes and say, *“Who do you think I chose as our leader and why?”*
- Encourage self-reflection and dialogue. Social alliances may be brought to light. Inquire with curiosity. After a few minutes, share that you have tapped everyone and ask each student to take a moment to write about two leadership skills they are strong in, and two they want to work on developing at a greater capacity. Ask the group to think of times they have worked well together and for times they have faced challenges as a group.

Peace Kids Social Awareness Activities for Children

Social awareness for children is a crucial part of SEL learning. We want our children to be healthy and whole in their emotional intelligence. In order to do this we must return to the understanding that diversity of experience is a part of life that we must commit to learning and practicing throughout our lives. Children have the innate ability to talk about oppression whether it is their own experiences of power dynamics in social interactions, or to reflect on racism, sexism and homophobia. In our experience we have found that adults often avoid deep conversations that heighten social awareness because they themselves do not feel skilled to facilitate such conversations, and feelings of discomfort which may arise.

We avidly encourage educators, parents and community members to talk about systemic oppression as a key way to practice SEL skill building.

With your class, read the following books to encourage social awareness.

Every Goodbye Ain't Gone: A Photo Narrative of Black Heritage on Salt Spring Island. You can purchase the book here: <http://www.amazon.com/Every-Goodbye-Aint-Evelyn-White/dp/0973251913>

This is a wonderful book by Evelyn White that can be shared as a class project/activity. Talk with children about the intriguing history of Salt Spring Island and ask for examples of racism today in our world. Support young people to notice the world both on island as well as on a larger global context.

Other excellent resources for conversations around race and privilege, and homophobia:

The Murakami Family of Salt Spring Island, is an excellent book about Japanese settlement of the island and racism experienced by the Murakami family. Available at Black Sheep Books, Ganges.

Mirrors of Privilege It's Elementary, by Debra Chasnoff is an excellent documentary film about white privilege and racism. Available at the SWOVA library.

"The techniques of indigenous learning were revealing themselves before my eyes, sweeping away preconceived notions of how learning was accomplished. It seemed to me that Dagara knowledge is learning that is living, breathing, flexible and spontaneous. What I was learning made sense only in terms of relationship. The learning one gets from a book, from the canons of the written tradition, is very different from the living, breathing knowledge that an elder has to offer- and different from the knowledge that comes from within, from the soul."

'Of Water and The Spirit', Malidoma Patrice Some, Dagara elder

Responsible Decision-making Activity for Children

Kids Only Circle

This is an activity that explores leadership, social and emotional learning, and the belief that children not only as individuals, but collectively can self-regulate, practice responsible decision-making and thrive as community!

The classroom teacher explains the concept of Responsible Decision-making as part of SEL learning to the class, and explains that as individuals, and a group, the Kids Only Circle is an opportunity to practice responsible decision-making.

The class is asked to create a circle where everyone can see each other and review Circle Guidelines.

Circle Guidelines

Creating agreements for how to be in the circle allows all children to have a free and interactive exchange, to respect a diversity of views, and to share responsibility for the well-being and direction of the group.

Agreements often include:

- We will hold stories or personal material in confidentiality.
- We listen to each other with compassion and curiosity. We practice listening from the heart and pay attention to what's being said without interpreting, judging, or trying to "fix" or rescue the person speaking.
- We offer a willingness to discover something about ourselves in the stories of other people.
- We ask for what we need and offer what we can.
- Everyone in the circle is a leader responsible for the care of our circle.
- We welcome differences of opinion and ideas.

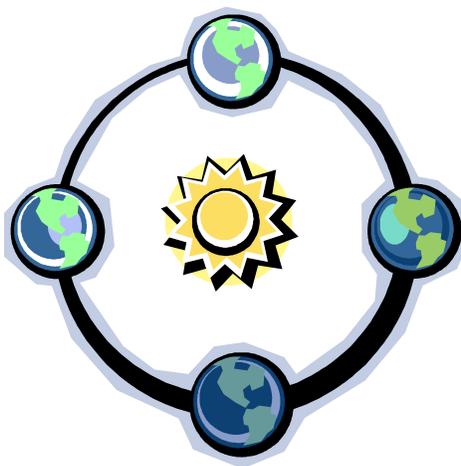
- We welcome silence in our circle to allow for reflection, for feelings to surface, and for a sense of understanding to emerge as the group proceeds.

The teacher explains that s/he will not be sitting in the circle nor will s/he be verbally involved in the group discussion. The group will be responsible for the following:

- To create a safe and respectful conversation space together for five minutes without any teacher involvement
- To ensure that as many people as possible in the circle get to contribute to the conversation
- To practice reflective listening

Topics for the circle can include:

- Sibling conflict – what are the challenges of these relationships?
- Gossip – why do people gossip and what type of a school environment does it create?
- Fear – what are some things each student fears?
- Anger – what are some things people get angry about? How do students express anger?



Relationship Skills Resources for Children

Have your class watch the following Youtube clip:

Best Friends Come in All Shapes and Sizes!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4OD8dxlry8>

Following the video, ask students for their thoughts about what they watched. Ask them to share their ideas around what makes a friendship special. Ask them to share three relationship skills in Bella and Tara's friendship.

It is very important to talk with children about conflict as a natural part of life, and a place where all of us are learning how to communicate with respect and thoughtfulness, throughout our lives. It is important to openly share with children that adults are always learning as well.

"To increase safety, move towards conflict with the intention of increasing mutual understanding." Elaine Shupugin

At SWOVA with all our youth violence prevention programs, we support children and youth to understand that making mistakes is a healthy and normal part of life. We offer participants the following three sentences as SEL learning skills and ask them to practice in their day-to-day communications with others. We encourage you to use them as well.

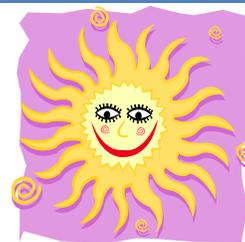
"I've made a mistake."
"I'm sorry."
"Do you need anything?"

In a world that is moving faster each day and a world in which many people believe their validity is based on doing, these three sentences are powerful tools for resolving conflict, fostering peace, and deepening intimacy with ourselves and within community. Many adults struggle to share these very sentences with a partner or family member when struggle arises for fear of being perceived as weak. It is crucial that young people understand that vulnerability is a foundational component of SEL learning. When we practice using these three sentences in or following conflict, we promote repair, understanding and joy between ourselves, and others.

Teacher Activities

Self-Awareness:

There are a number of ways teachers can practice self-awareness in the classroom, both in the presence of students and during everyday life outside of school and work. This culminates in a practice of mindfulness, emphasizing compassion and empathy for students. As the Dalai Lama and Daniel Goleman, noted in *Destructive Emotions: How Can We Overcome Them?* "...true empathy and a universal compassion bespeak a goodness that not only is admirable spiritually but also marks one as truly extraordinary" (p.21). Teaching provides one of the most amazing opportunities for adults to be empathetic and compassionate towards children, youth and themselves.



Take time (if possible 10–20 minutes) each morning completely alone to reflect on your emotional state. By beginning the day with a personal check-in, knowing what you are feeling can help in the process of being self-aware. This is part of self-compassion, honouring what is going on within you, and being kind to yourself – kind enough to take the time to acknowledge the range of both the amazing and conversely difficult emotions.

At the time of the writing of this curriculum Deepak Chopra and Oprah Winfrey offered a free 21-day meditation course, designed to help participants become more in tune with themselves.

<https://chopracentermeditation.com/>

When dealing with classroom management issues, come from a place of personal self-expression. In doing so you can practice emotional intelligence and self-management in front of students. For example, if a student calls another student a bad name, a teacher could say

"I feel very uncomfortable with what I have just heard. Would someone like to tell me what is going on?"

After hearing from students about what has happened, a teacher could then express their needs. For example:

"I need everyone to feel safe and comfortable, and so my specific request is that there is no name calling in this classroom."

If a safe space has been created, a teacher may be able to practice empathy for students, by expressing concern if they talk about not feeling safe or having experienced violence. Obviously we may feel overwhelmed if we try to solve every problem students have. However, we can engage in empathy through self-awareness.

For example, last week a student said that she had been approached by older men numerous times while riding the bus from Swartz Bay to the mall in Victoria. I expressed concern to her that this had happened to her. I cannot solve this problem, but I can say,

"I feel concerned and sad that this has happened to you. Would you be willing to tell your parents, and if it happens again approach the bus driver to make sure you are safe?"

By modeling emotional expressiveness to students, teachers can pave the way for them to feel safe in their own lives to do so. This is indeed a powerful practice for all concerned.

Self-Management



Studies have shown that people who deliberately engage in a practice of empathy and compassion for other living beings experience greater levels of happiness, contentment, less stress, worry, anxiety and sadness. Essentially the emotions they are experiencing are generally the more positive emotions. Of course, we will all feel different emotions at different times, and acknowledging what we are feeling is part of the practice of self-awareness. We do know that not everyone can be happy all of the time, and that we do experience anger which is a normal human emotion, though often it is seen in a negative light.

Teachers can be aware of the presence of anger in the own lives, as it may filter into the classroom, and try to take care of themselves as needed. Of course it is not possible to leave students alone in the room, but we all need to feel that we can have the space to deal with anger as it arises in our lives. Teachers may want to engage in a practice of journaling or self-reflection, as anger arises in the day-to-day. Keeping a journal about anger may help to calm the emotion and get at the underlying emotions.

Try journaling the following questions about anger:

1. Reflecting back on your childhood, how did you see anger being displayed or contained? Did you see adults in your life being angry or not? What did the anger look like? How did you feel in the presence of anger?
2. On a scale of 1–10 (one being the least angry and ten being the most angry), in the last week I have felt a _____. Do the same for the last month, year, decade and lifetime, and talk about the things that you feel angry about.
3. Pick a specific incident that you felt angry about, describe it, with a focus on the feelings in your body.
4. Pick a different angry incident and then talk about the different feelings that may have been underneath the anger, how you handled the situation.
5. Talk about a time where you liked how you handled an angry situation and a time where you regret how you handled your anger.

6. Journal about a time someone got angry with you. Ask yourself, how did it feel? What would you have liked the person to know about how you felt? If you were practicing empathy, what do you think that people who received your anger, or venting, felt?
7. Brainstorm some alternative ways of managing your anger or getting it out. There is plenty to be angry about in the world, but directed in a positive way, anger can be a very useful emotion. Try turning it into something positive, such as a song, a work of art, or go split wood, ride a bicycle, or run up a mountain. Often physical exertion can do wonders for moving through anger.
8. Vision: Picture yourself in the future, able to recognize and maturely handle anger as it arises by openly communicating your feelings with people. What does this look like? What do you look like as a result of your newfound abilities? What does life look like?

Teachers can express feeling angry in a healthy way by engaging in practices of self-awareness and articulating feeling angry. Often students are amazed that an adult expressing anger is not loud, out of control, and in a state of rage. In doing so, teachers can be role models to students.



Social Awareness

- Take a moment as you look around the lunchroom, and ask yourself, what are people possibly going through?
- What would it be like to walk in someone else's shoes?
- Ask yourself what your students bring to school each and everyday.
- What needs are not being met when there are behaviours being exhibited?

Responsible Decision-Making:

The activity around responsible decision-making is an activity in self-reflection. As human beings no one is perfect in terms of making responsible decisions. All of us have erred at one time or another, maybe still do, and most certainly will in the future. Take a few moments the next time an important decision is in front of you, especially if you are in the position of role modeling responsible decision-making. Ask yourself, "Am I acting with the integrity that reflects my values? If students were to see the decisions I am making, would I be held up as a role model?" The work we all can do as role models is to question what stands in the way of making sound decisions? What prevents us from living our truest potential? What can we do to be more whole, and complete, and live peacefully ourselves?



Relationship Building

Try out the unresolved conflict activity from Peace Kids with your staff at a meeting to practice deep and authentic listening.

Ask people to sit across from another person and talk about an unresolved conflict. The only job of the listener is to listen carefully. No questions should be asked, except at the end when the listener asks if the person talking has anything else to add, and then if they are finished.

To practice reflective listening in a conflict, when someone is done speaking try paraphrasing back what you have heard by asking, “I heard you say _____, did I get it right?”



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