

# El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships

Lesson Plans

## Adaptation Note

The *El Camino: The Road to Health Relationships* curriculum and related materials have been adapted from *El Camino*—a goal-setting teen pregnancy prevention curriculum.<sup>1,2,3</sup> In September 2017, the DC Office of Human Rights partnered with Child Trends to adapt an existing evidence-informed curriculum, *El Camino*, for use with DC middle school youth to improve healthy relationship skills and prevent bullying and other forms of interpersonal conflict. The original *El Camino* curriculum is a comprehensive, goal-setting teen pregnancy prevention program developed by Child Trends with an aim to reduce teen childbearing and increase educational achievement among adolescents, particularly Latino youth. The program helps teens to personally identify their goals and develop their own camino, or road, to pursue their goals. To adapt this curriculum to support DC middle school youth in developing healthy relationships, Child Trends engaged in a rigorous development and testing process to develop a DC-specific curriculum that can be implemented in youth serving agencies, including schools, youth groups, and after-school programs. The curriculum was piloted with students in a total of five different classrooms. Information gathered through feedback forms completed by youth participants in each pilot session suggest they enjoyed the activities and were applying what they learned about healthy relationships and decision-making. However, logistical challenges in collecting pre/post evaluations resulted in small sample sizes; thus, we are not able to conduct more formal analyses of the effects of participation in the program.

## A Word about Implementation Planning

This curriculum is intended to present developmentally-appropriate information for early adolescents to learn about healthy relationships and decision-making skills in an in-person setting. While the characters presented throughout the curriculum were chosen to represent a variety of personal characteristics, they were limited to avoid overly complicated storylines. However, the activities and discussions are youth-driven and intended to reflect participants' own personal experiences. Facilitators should consider ways to use questions, prompts, and examples inclusive of other salient personal characteristics of their youth participants. Please review Appendix D: Facilitation Suggestions within the Front Matter for more guidance as you tailor the curriculum activities and discussions to meet the needs of youth in your community.

## Funding Note

This project is funded wholly or in part by DC Department of Health (DC Health).

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<sup>1</sup> Moore, K. A., Manlove, J., Parekh, J., Faccio, B., Beckwith, S., & Guzman, L. (2019). *Reducing Teen Childbearing among Latinos: An Innovative Anti-Poverty Strategy*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved via:

<https://www.childtrends.org/research/research-by-topic/el-camino-goal-setting-program>

<sup>2</sup> Moore, K. A., Manlove, J., Parekh, J., Faccio, B., Beckwith, S., & Guzman, L. (2019). *El Camino: A goal-setting teen pregnancy prevention curriculum – Lesson Plans*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved via:

<https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/El-Camino-Curriculum-with-Cover-English.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Moore, K. A., Manlove, J., Parekh, J., Faccio, B., Beckwith, S., & Guzman, L. (2019). *El Camino: A goal-setting teen pregnancy prevention curriculum – Front Matter*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends.

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# Lesson

# 1

## Program Introduction and Values

### OVERVIEW

#### Lesson 1 Synopsis

In *Lesson 1*, students will learn about the *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* program. They will be introduced to the model of life as a road and to the concept of values as something that drives us to be our best selves. They will begin to identify the values that are most important to them and consider whether their actions reflect their values.

#### Lesson 1 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Briefly describe the *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* Program.
- Establish a set of group agreements.
- Identify a set of personal values that are important to them.

#### Key Messages

- **El Camino Program**
  - Know yourself.
  - Use a decision making tool.
  - Understand how your relationships with friends, peers, and family influence the direction of your life “path.”
  - Practice skills.
- **Lesson 1**
  - Knowing your values will help you be the best version of yourself.

#### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- **6-8.1.1.5** Describe qualities that contribute to a positive self-image.

#### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

- Index cards
- Value and definition cards
-  Agree/Disagree signs
-  Identify Your Values handout
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

#### LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

##### Lesson 1.1:

1A: Welcome to *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* Program! (3 min)

1B: Group Agreements and Key Message (5 min)

1C: What Are Values? (20 min)

1D: Exit Ticket (2 min)

##### Lesson 1.2:

1E: Welcome and Review (3 min)

1F: Vote with Your Feet (10 min)

1G: Values Sort (15 min)

1H: Exit Ticket



# Lesson 1 Procedures

## Lesson 1.1

### Activity 1A: Welcome to *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* Program! (3 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Goals of El Camino slide

#### INTRODUCTION



- “Over the next few weeks, we will be doing a new program in this class called *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships*, which is about decision making and healthy relationships.”
- “As part of this program, you will learn about building healthy relationships by:
  - Reading stories called novellas,
  - Doing activities (like role plays), and
  - Having discussions.”

#### DEFINITION



- “Does anyone know, or can anyone guess, what the Spanish word ‘camino’ means in English?” **Take a few responses. If students are not aware of what the word means, explain that Camino means “road” or “path.”**

#### GOALS OF EL CAMINO



- “The El Camino program has four goals:
  - **Know yourself** inside and out by identifying your driving values—what you stand for and what makes you your best self.
  - **Use a decision making tool** that will help you to make good decisions that are in line with the values that drive you.
  - **Understand how your relationships** with friends, peers, and family influence the direction of your life ‘path.’
  - **Practice skills** that will help you to avoid and deal with challenges that can get in the way of developing healthy relationships.”

## Activity 1B: Group Agreements and Key Message (5 minutes)

- **Present** a list of group agreements to students.
- **Ask a student volunteer(s)** to read the group agreements out loud.
- **Ask students** if they would like to add any other group agreements to the list.
- **Ask for volunteers** to read the key message for Lesson 1:
  - *Knowing your values will help you be the best version of yourself.*

### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

### EL CAMINO GROUP AGREEMENTS

1. Participate as much as you can.
2. You only have to share what you feel comfortable sharing.
3. Make comments that are encouraging and judgement-free.
4. One person speaks at a time—no interrupting.
5. It's okay to disagree but do so in a respectful manner.
6. Treat others how you would like to be treated.
7. Listen.
8. When you are at the *El Camino* program, you only do work that is related to *El Camino*.
9. Have fun!

### EXPLAINING THE GROUP AGREEMENTS

In order to get the most out of *El Camino*, it is important for everyone to feel comfortable during the program and avoid things that can make others feel offended or uncomfortable.

Group agreements are a list of ways we should act or not act during *El Camino* that we all agree on.

We will have this list of group agreements posted during every class. We can refer to them whenever we need to. We can even add to the list if we feel that we need to.

## Activity 1C: What Are Values? (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Value and definition cards

### INTRODUCE THE CONCEPT OF “VALUES”

- Ask if students know what “values” are.
- “Our values are a huge part of who we are. They impact how we think, feel, and behave. Our values are what make us our best self.”
- “We learned earlier that ‘camino’ is the Spanish word for road. If we think about our life as a road, our values are what drive us to where we want to go.” [Check for student understanding of the phrase “values that drive you.”]
- “We all have values, or things that are important to us, but we may or may not have ever stopped to think about what they are.”
- Ask students for an example of a value.

### EXAMPLES OF VALUES

An example of a value is *fairness*. If someone values *fairness*, that means they feel it is important to treat other people the way they want to be treated/to treat all people fairly.

Another example is *gratitude*. If someone values *gratitude*, it means they feel it is important to notice and appreciate the good people and things that happen in life.

On the other hand, *black hair* is not a value, since it describes someone's physical appearance rather than something that is important to them or that makes them their best self.

**If students need more help understanding values, consider making an examples/nonexamples T-chart to reinforce definitions.**

### ACTIVITY

- **Divide students into three groups.** Since there are 15 different value cards and definition cards, each group will get a different set of 5 value cards and 5 definition cards. Give students 7 minutes to match as many values and definitions as they can.
- **After 7 minutes, bring the class back together.** Once all cards are matched, ask volunteers from each group to share their matches out loud with the class. Other students can then be given an opportunity to say if they disagree. Help to clarify any misunderstandings that students might have about the values or what they mean.
- **Ask students if they can think of any other values that were not mentioned.** Add any additional values they may mention to the Values and Definitions slide (or flip chart paper).

## VALUE AND DEFINITION CARDS

### TEACHER'S NOTE

For this activity, print and cut one set of cards with only definitions and one set of cards with only value names so students can match the two (see **Appendix: Student Handouts + Printed Materials**).

<p><b>Acceptance/Open-Mindedness:</b> Open to new experiences, ideas, and people. Non-judgmental.</p>	<p><b>Authenticity:</b> Being true to yourself.</p>	<p><b>Creativity:</b> Thinking of new ways to do things. Using your imagination to create something artistic.</p>
<p><b>Kindness:</b> Being friendly and respectful to other people.</p>	<p><b>Fame:</b> Being known or talked about by many people.</p>	<p><b>Family:</b> Caring about close relationships with your family.</p>
<p><b>Honesty:</b> Being fair and truthful.</p>	<p><b>Humor:</b> Being funny or making people laugh.</p>	<p><b>Leadership:</b> Encouraging a group to get things done together.</p>
<p><b>Loyalty:</b> Showing support for your friends, family, and/or the things you believe are important.</p>	<p><b>Persistence:</b> Continuing to try even when something is hard.</p>	<p><b>Power:</b> Being able to influence other people or events.</p>
<p><b>Prosperity/Wealth:</b> Having money in your pocket.</p>	<p><b>Self-Control:</b> Being able to control your impulses, words, and behavior.</p>	<p><b>Faith:</b> Belief in a higher power or inner strength.</p>

### Activity 1D: Exit Ticket

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 1 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- **Pass out** an index card to each student.
- **Ask students to write** on the index card something that they find confusing about values or something related to values that they would like to know more about.

## Lesson 1.2:

### Activity 1E: Welcome and Review

(3 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 1 into two sections.\**

- “Last time, we talked about what we will be learning in the *El Camino* program and came up with some group agreements. Let’s start by reviewing our group agreements.”

#### EL CAMINO GROUP AGREEMENTS

1. Participate as much as you can.
  2. You only have to share what you feel comfortable sharing.
  3. Make comments that are encouraging and judgement-free.
  4. One person speaks at a time—no interrupting.
  5. It’s okay to disagree but do so in a respectful manner.
  6. Treat others how you would like to be treated.
  7. Listen.
  8. When you are at the *El Camino* program, you only do work that is related to *El Camino*.
  9. Have fun!
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 1:**
    - *Knowing your values will help you be the best version of yourself.*

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Messages slide

### Activity 1F: Vote with Your Feet

(10 minutes)

- “In the *El Camino* program we will be talking about how knowing what’s important to us can help us make good decisions for ourselves. Making good decisions for ourselves can feel difficult when it involves other people with whom we have some kind of relationship. But our values can steer us to make choices that respect both ourselves and others—choices that help us build stronger, healthier relationships with our peers, friends, and family.”

#### MATERIALS

- Agree/Disagree signs

- “Let’s do an activity to get us moving and thinking about what might be important to us in our relationships with others.”
- **Show students the signs hung on the wall:** “Agree” or “Disagree.”
- “I am going to read a few statements to you – one at a time. After I read each statement, I want each of you to decide which sign best fits with how you feel about the statement and then go stand by that sign (that is, vote with your feet). If you are not sure how you want to answer, you can stand in the middle of the room.”
- “After everyone has chosen a position, I am going to ask for a few volunteers standing under different signs to explain why they chose to stand where they are standing. At any time during the discussion, you can change your mind and move quietly to a new position.”
- “Does anyone have any questions about how the activity is going to work?”

### VOTE WITH YOUR FEET STATEMENTS

1. I love meeting new people!
2. Having my phone out in class isn't distracting to me.
3. Joking about people online doesn't hurt anybody.
4. If I see someone sitting alone, I'll go out of my way to include them.
5. If someone disrespects me, I have to get even.
6. I have at least one adult at school that I can go to with questions about anything.

#### TEACHER'S NOTE

List statements in the order you wish to discuss them. Stick to 10 minutes—this may mean that you cannot use every statement.

## Activity 1G: Values Sort (15 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Identify Your Values handout
- Values and Definitions slide

- “Your values may have influenced how you voted with your feet. Now we’re going to spend a few minutes thinking about our own values and what makes us our best selves.”
- **Give each student an *Identify Your Values* handout.**
- **Give students 8 minutes to sort values into three different groups:** Very Important to Me, Somewhat Important to Me, and Not Important to Me.
  - Students should draw a *heart* in the boxes of at least one value that is very important to them
  - Students should make a *check mark* in the boxes of at least one value that is somewhat important to them
  - Students should mark an *X* in the boxes of at least one value that is not important to them

- “Your handout includes the 15 values that we learned about during the last lesson, but we also talked about other examples of values that may be important to you. If there is a value that is important to you, and you want to include it, you can add it in one of the empty boxes on your handout.”
- **Share the Values and Definitions slide, adding any additional values that students suggest.**
- **After 8 minutes, ask a few volunteers to share their results, if they are comfortable doing so.**

- “Why did you choose the values you did for each group?”
- “Do you think people closest to you (family, friends) know that you would have chosen these values?”

## Activity 1G: Exit Ticket (2 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- **Pass out** an index card to each student.
- **Ask students** to write on the index card one sentence sharing whether the values they identified as “very important to you” make them feel like their best self.

## Identify Your Values Handout

-  Draw a heart in the boxes of **5 values** that are very important to you.
-  Make a check mark in the boxes of **5 values** that are somewhat important to you.
-  Mark an X in the boxes of **5 values** that are not important to you.

<p><b>Acceptance/Open-Mindedness:</b> Open to new experiences, ideas, and people. Non-judgmental.</p>	<p><b>Authenticity:</b> Being true to yourself.</p>	<p><b>Creativity:</b> Thinking of new ways to do things. Using your imagination to create something artistic.</p>
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<p><b>Prosperity/Wealth:</b> Having money in your pocket.</p>	<p><b>Self-Control:</b> Being able to control your impulses, words, and behavior.</p>	<p><b>Faith:</b> Belief in a higher power or inner strength.</p>

# Lesson 2

## Personal Identity: What Drives You?

### OVERVIEW

#### Lesson 2 Synopsis

In *Lesson 2*, students will continue learning about values and thinking about how to demonstrate the values that are important to them. A major focus of this lesson will be examining how students portray themselves to others online and reflecting on how their personal values might influence their online behavior. Students will read the first two chapters of the novella, which will be a continuous thread throughout the program, and consider the values demonstrated by the characters.

#### Lesson 2 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Identify online behaviors that align with their personal values.
- Identify at least one consequence of sharing personal information on social media.

#### Key Message

- Deciding what, and how much, to share about yourself can affect your relationships

#### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- 6-8.1.1.5 Describe qualities that contribute to a positive self-image.
- 6-8.1.4.13 Describe how sharing or posting information electronically about self or others on social media sites can negatively impact mental and emotional health.
- 6-8.2.4.14 Demonstrate how to manage personal information in electronic communication and when using social media to protect the personal safety of oneself and others.

### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

- Index cards
-  Novella Chapter 1
-  Character Values Chart handout
-  Novella Chapter 2
-  Identity Profiles handout
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

### LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

#### Lesson 2.1:

2A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 min)

2B: Values Sketch (3 min)

2C: Novella (13 min)

2D: Novella Character Values (10 min)

2E: Exit Ticket (2 min)

#### Lesson 2.2:

2F: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 min)

2G: Novella (12 min)

2H: Social Media Profiles (14 min)

2I: Exit Ticket (2 min)

## Lesson 2 Procedures

### Lesson 2.1:

#### Activity 2A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 minutes)



- “Welcome back to *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* program. You’ll remember from last class that we talked about values and about how knowing the values that are most important to us can help us to know who we are inside and out. We’re going to talk more about values today.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 2.**
  - Deciding what, and how much, to share about yourself can affect your relationships.

#### MATERIALS

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- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

#### Activity 2B: Values Sketch (3 minutes)



- “Last class, you each picked values that are very important to you. To get started today, I want you to each pick one of those values and spend about three minutes drawing what that value makes you think of or how that value makes you feel.”

#### MATERIALS

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- Index cards or paper
- Values and Definitions slide

#### Activity 2C: Novella (13 minutes)



- “Now, we are going to read a story/novella about a group of students at Franklin Middle School.”
- “After we read the chapter, we are going to discuss some questions about the students. We will continue to read about these students and their friends and families throughout the program.”
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter.**

#### MATERIALS

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- Novella Chapter 1

## Novella Chapter 1: Back to School at Franklin Middle School

**Dani, Asia, DeQuan, and Jayden** are four students at Franklin Middle School. Dani, Asia, and DeQuan have been friends since 1<sup>st</sup> grade. They always walked home from school and ate lunch together and spent time at Key rec center. Jayden just recently moved to the neighborhood.

### DANI



Dani

Dani lives with her mother and father and younger sister. Her mother is from the Dominican Republic. Her father is from Washington, D.C. Her favorite subjects in school are reading and science. Dani likes to go shopping with friends and do art projects at the rec. She also likes to cook with her mother and sister. Dani often posts pics of herself and her best friends, Asia and DeQuan, and messages them in their group chat. Dani likes school, and she feels it is important to be nice to her friends. In the last year, Dani's body has changed a lot. Her mother says she is growing up, but Dani often feels uncomfortable about the way she looks. Dani's values are family, honesty, and persistence.

### ASIA



Asia

Asia lives with her mother, grandmother, and older sister Kaylie. She likes to spend time with her friend Dani. Sometimes they go shopping or to a movie, but usually they just go to Toni's carry-out. Asia also likes to go out with Kaylie and her friends. Asia's mom works at a grocery store and often works late at night or on weekends. Asia's grandmother stays home with her and Kaylie. Asia helps her grandmother around the house. Asia thinks that middle school will be a lot more fun than elementary school. She wants to join the dance team this year. Asia feels like her mother treats her like a child and she really wants to be more independent. Asia's values are fame, creativity, and authenticity.

### DEQUAN



DeQuan

DeQuan lives with his mother and step-father. DeQuan's mother is a teacher's assistant and his step-father is a building contractor. He is best friends with Dani and Asia. They have been friends for a long time and DeQuan feels happy and comfortable spending time with them. He likes going to the rec and doing art projects and hanging with them at Toni's carry-out. DeQuan also likes going shopping or out to eat with his mother. DeQuan is a good drum player and he listens to a lot of different kinds of music. This year DeQuan wants to play drums in the school band. It is important to him to work hard practicing his music. DeQuan knows a lot of boys in school are talking about how they feel about girls. However, DeQuan has those feelings for boys. DeQuan's values are acceptance/open-mindedness, loyalty, and self-control.

### JAYDEN



Jayden

Jayden just moved to the neighborhood. Jayden likes to spend time playing basketball and playing video games. Sometimes he goes out to eat at Toni's carry-out with other guys from the rec basketball team or just hangs outside. He doesn't know many people in the area. Jayden is in foster care. Jayden's mother died from cancer two years ago. He started missing school and was arrested for shoplifting. He

spent a couple of weeks in juvenile detention. Now, it is important to Jayden to keep out of trouble and pass all of his classes. He also wants to be on the school basketball team this year. Jayden’s values are leadership, power, and humor.

## Activity 2D: Novella Character Values (10 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Character Values Chart slide
- Character Values Chart handout
- Values/Definitions slide

- “We’ve talked a lot about the values that are important to us and make us the best versions of ourselves. Now let’s think about what values are important to each of the characters in the novella based on the introductions we just read.”
- **Give each student a copy of the *Character Values Chart handout*.** Work through the first character as a whole group, then ask students to work through the last three characters with a small group.
- **Break students into small groups and assign one character to each group.** For each character done as a group, ask students to respond to the following questions:
  - What did we learn about this character in the novella?
  - What do you think tells us about what the character thinks is important? Why?
- **When students are done, ask 1 or 2 group volunteers to share their responses.**
- **After all groups have shared, ask:**
  - “Which character are you most likely to be friends with? Why?”

### REMINDER

A value is something that is important to you, not just the activities you like to do.

## Activity 2E: Exit Ticket (2 minutes)

***\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 2 into two sections.\****

### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- **Pass out** an index card to each student.
- **Ask students** to write on the index card one thing about themselves that most or all of their friends know about and one thing that none of their friends know about. Do either of these things include any of the values they marked as “very important”?

## Character Values Chart

Character	Values	Evidence
1.  Dani		
2.  Asia		
3.  DeQuan		
4.  Jayden		

**Discussion Question:** Which character are you most likely to be friends with? Why?

## Lesson 2.2:

### Activity 2F: Welcome, Review, and Lesson Overview (2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 2 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

- “Last time we read the first chapter of our novella and reviewed what values are important to the characters. Today, we are going to continue talking about values and how your social media can reflect your values.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 2:**
  - Deciding what, and how much, to share about yourself can affect your relationships.

### Activity 2G: Novella (12 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 2

- “Does anyone know, or can anyone guess what ‘identity’ means?”
  - **Identity is the qualities, characteristics, or beliefs that make a person who they are.**
- “There are lots of things that might influence our identity and how we see ourselves. Can anyone think of something that might shape your identity?”
- “We communicate ‘who we are’ to the world in multiple ways. We do this *directly* by telling people about ourselves. But there are lots of *indirect* ways that we do this too. People form impressions about us based, at least in part, on these things. And sometimes, people even treat us differently than we would have expected, because what we are communicating out to the world doesn’t reflect our identity and who we really are.”
- “We are going to read about Dani, Asia, DeQuan, and Jayden and how they spend their first Saturday of the school year. Let’s pay attention to how they share things about themselves with others.”

#### EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT SHAPE YOUR IDENTITY

Students may need examples to help them understand things that shape your identity. You might start with the question, “When or where have you heard the word ‘identity’?”

- Race
- Gender
- Nationality/geographic areas lived
- Hobbies (e.g., sports or music)
- Religion
- Socio-economic status
- Culture
- Key life experiences
- Values
- Passions
- Traditions

Younger students may benefit from additional examples of each of these.

- Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter. After each section, ask the corresponding discussion questions.

## Novella Chapter 2: First Weekend of the School Year

The first Saturday after school started was a warm and sunny day. Everyone was making plans for the first weekend of the school year.

### DANI

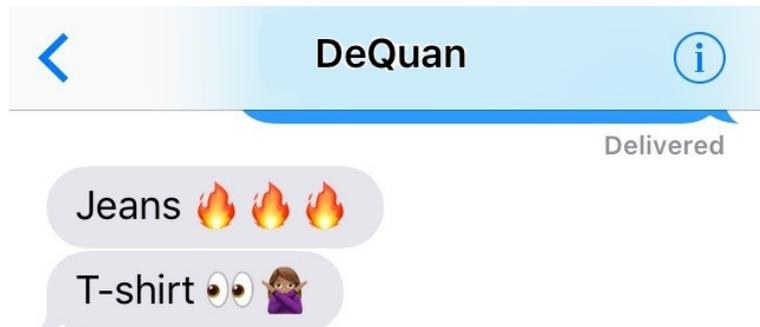


Dani

Dani was home with her family in the morning. She had chores she needed to finish before she could go out. She didn't really mind the chores, but she and DeQuan had made plans to go to Toni's carry-out and see a new movie with her favorite actor. A few hours before the movie, DeQuan texted her:



Dani was anxiously trying to decide what to wear. Her favorite purple shirt didn't really fit her anymore. She put it on anyway with her jeans and took a quick pic to send to DeQuan. DeQuan was always very honest with his comments. He texted:



Dani laughed and changed into her pink tee with the sparkly heart.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some things that help us know more about Dani's identity?
- How does she share things about herself with friends?
- Do the things she shares reflect her values?

## ASIA



Asia

Asia and her sister Kaylie were going to the mall. Asia had \$15 from a birthday gift from her grandmother. Asia and Kaylie are about the same size, and Kaylie agreed to let Asia borrow a skirt. Asia felt that her own clothes were too childish. When Asia finished getting dressed, she sent a few selfies to her friends. At the mall, Asia tried on a lot of clothes. She posted selfies in different outfits and each one got a lot of “likes,” but she decided to spend her money on some make-up instead.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some things that help us know more about Asia’s identity?
- How does she share things about herself with friends?
- Do the things she shares reflect her values?

## DEQUAN



DeQuan

DeQuan woke up early on Saturday and listened to some music. He could smell his mom cooking bacon and sausage for breakfast. He texted Dani to confirm their plans. As usual, she sent him a picture of what she was wearing.

The movie was pretty funny. DeQuan and Dani kept texting about how much they both liked the lead actor. He posted about seeing the movie and a few of his cousins in New York ‘liked’ it. Later in the evening, DeQuan practiced his favorite songs on the drums and changed his profile picture to a photo Dani had taken of him sitting at his drum set.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some things that help us know more about DeQuan’s identity?
- How does he share things about himself with friends?
- Do the things he shares reflect his values?

## JAYDEN



Jayden

Jayden usually spends his weekends practicing basketball. Key rec is closed on the weekends, but there are a couple of outside courts nearby. Jayden doesn’t know many of the guys who play down there – some of them are high school students. After shooting some free throws, he decided to go down to Toni’s carry-out to buy a sub and fries. As he ate, he scrolled through his newsfeed. He saw one post from a girl in his English class – she was posting a lot of pics of her shopping and trying on different clothes. He ‘liked’ one of her pictures. Jayden also saw posts from his favorite basketball player and found a few funny memes to send to his friends.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some things that help us know more about Jayden’s identity?
- How does he share things about himself with friends?
- Do the things he shares reflect his values?

## Activity 2H: Identity Profiles (12 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Identity Profiles handout
- Values and Definitions slide

### TEACHER'S NOTE

You can modify this activity based on the needs of your students. To allow more time for discussion, ask students to select just one thing to “post” on their social media profile.

- “Earlier, we talked about how there are different ways we can communicate our identity (who we are) to the world. One of the ways we do this is through social media.”
- Give students *Identity Profiles* handout.
- Ask students to draw/write three things to “post” on their social media profile:
  - **Post a photo or meme:** what does the picture mean to you, and why have you chosen to share it with others?
  - **Link to a video:** what is your opinion about this video, and why have you chosen to share it with others?
  - **Song or poetry lyrics, or quote:** what meaning do these words have for you, and why have you chosen to share it with others?
- Give students 7 minutes to draw/write their social media profile and posts.
- “Now, I want you to evaluate your profile and posts against the values you marked in Lesson 1 as being, ‘very important to me.’ In other words, which of those values do you think you have or have not communicated in your profile?”

### WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION

- What did you decide to share and why is that important to you?
- Does what you post always have to demonstrate your values?
- What are some positive and negative consequences of sharing things online?

### WHAT SHOULD YOU SHARE?

If time allows, help students consider what they should post or not post online. Be sensitive to what students might share when deciding whether to extend this discussion—it may bring up triggering scenarios or drama between classmates.

How do you think social media can help you establish your identity? Make new friends? Strengthen relationships with others?

Are there ways that social media can be damaging or hurtful? Has anyone seen things shared on social media that people posted but probably shouldn't have?

How do you decide what kind of content you should or shouldn't share? How do you decide what kind of content you want to see and what you should unfollow?

## Identity Profiles #nofilter

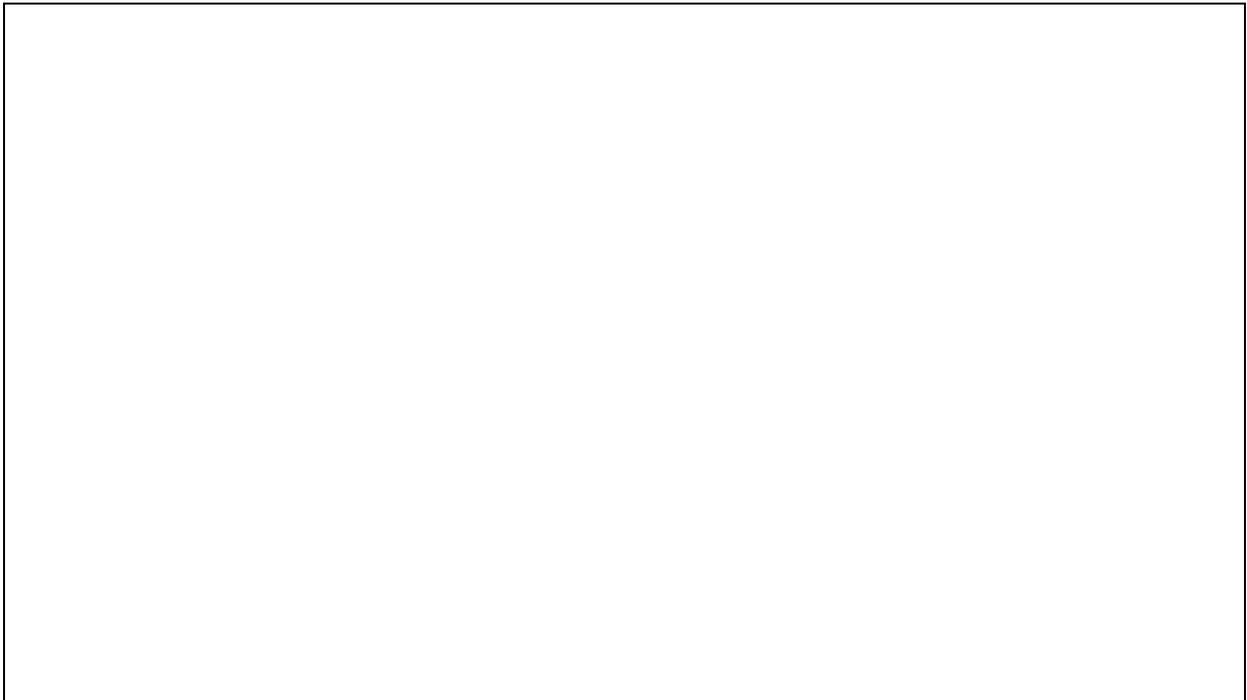
Use the box below to create/draw a profile of one of the following social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, or a personal blog.

### INCLUDE

**Post a photo/video:** what does the picture or video mean to you, and why have you chosen to share it with others?

**Link to a current event:** what is your opinion about this event, and why have you chosen to share it with others?

**Song or poetry lyrics:** what meaning do these words have for you, and why have you chosen to share it with others?



## Activity 2I: Exit Ticket (2 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- **Pass out** an index card to each student.
- **Ask students** to write on the index card one thing they might share online that demonstrates their identity (who they are) or their values and one thing that they want to either stop sharing online or stop viewing online.

# Lesson

# 3

# Introducing STAR

## OVERVIEW

### Lesson 3 Synopsis

In *Lesson 3*, students will be introduced to a decision making tool: *Stop. Think. Act on your values. Reflect (STAR)*. Students will practice considering choices and potential consequences (good and bad), potential influences on their decisions, opportunities to ask for help or advice, and how their decision could impact others.

### Lesson 3 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Describe the four steps of the STAR decision making tool and explain how it can be helpful in making decisions based on their values.
- Reflect on how they could have used STAR to navigate making decisions in the past.

### Key Message

- The STAR decision making tool can help you make decisions that are in line with your values.

### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- *6-8.3.5.19* Examine how self-esteem impacts decision making around personal health and relationships.
- *6-8.1.4.13* Describe how sharing or posting information electronically about self or others on social media sites (e.g., texting, phone, email, and group-chats) can negatively impact mental and emotional health.

### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

-  Index cards (one set with red light/green light; see 3G)
-  Sticky notes
-  Grocery bag
-  Flip chart paper
-  Markers
-  Novella Chapter 3
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

### LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

#### Lesson 3.1

3A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 min)

3B: Introduce STAR (10 min)

3C: STAR Activity (15 min)

3D: Reflection to Go (2 min)

#### Lesson 3.2

3E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (5 min)

3F: Novella Chapter 3 (20 min)

3G: Reflection to Go (5 min)

## Lesson 3 Procedures

### Lesson 3.1:

#### Activity 3A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

- “Last class we talked more about the values that drive us to be our best selves, and how we can make sure that we’re being true to ourselves through what we do and what we say.”
- “Today we’re going to learn about a decision making tool that will help us make decisions that are in line with our values. Let’s read the key message for today’s lesson together.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 3:**
  - The STAR decision making tool can help you make decisions that are in line with your values.

#### Activity 3B: Introduce STAR: Stop. Think. Act on your values. Reflect. (10 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- STAR slide

- “Today we are going to talk about decision making. We’ll learn a tool that can help us make decisions for ourselves that line up with our values.”
- “We make lots of decisions every day. Some of these are small—what should I wear today? What do I want to eat for lunch? Do I want to buy tickets to see that new movie this weekend? But some decisions are bigger, because they impact others or our relationships with others. These are the kinds of decisions we’re going to focus on in *El Camino*. Can anyone think of an example of a decision you’ve made that impacted someone else, or impacted your relationship with someone else?”
- “Decision making is hard, and often we make decisions impulsively—this means quickly, without much thought. Sometimes we make decisions so quickly, we don’t even realize that’s what we’re doing. Sometimes we think we are just ‘reacting’ to a situation, but really, we are making a quick decision to react in a certain way.”

#### EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT IMPACT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

- Yelling at someone who is annoying you or stressing you out
- Responding to or sharing someone’s post on social media
- Fighting with someone or taking a video of others fighting
- Ignoring someone’s text message

- “Can you think of a time when you reacted immediately to something, and later wished you had handled the situation differently?” **Encourage students to share an example only if they are comfortable doing so. Consider providing your own example.**
  - What happened as a result of your reaction? How did it feel?
  - What do you wish you had done differently?
- “I’m going to share with you some steps that can help you avoid making decisions that you might regret. The process is called **STAR**. In this case, **STAR** stands for: Stop. Think. Act on your values. Reflect.”
- **Use the facilitator PowerPoint slide deck to walk through each step of STAR.**
- **“Stop:** When you face a decision—stop! Notice that there is a decision to be made. This can be hard, especially if we’re feeling strong emotions and want to react to the situation right away.”
- **“Think:** There are a few questions we may want to ask ourselves in this step when we are deciding what to do. The main ones are: What options do we have? and What might happen? We might also think back to other times where we have had a similar problem. What did we do then? Did it work out well? Did our decision help us stick to our values, or might a different decision might have turned out better?”
- **“Act on your values:** Once we've made our choice, it's time to act. We need to make sure that the way we act on our decision lines up with our values.”
- **“Reflect:** After we act on our decision, we need to ask ourselves some questions about how it worked out. How do we feel about what happened?”
- “We’ll go through each step of STAR one-by-one in later lessons, and we’ll learn some skills for each step of making a decision that can help us build healthy relationships. For the last step, reflecting is something we’ll be doing a lot, because we make decisions all the time! So, we’ll practice reflecting every lesson.”

## Activity 3C: STAR Activity (15 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Sticky notes
- Grocery bag
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- STAR Activity slide

### TEACHER'S NOTE

Remind students to only write down a situation on the sticky note, not how they handled it. Consider using examples of decisions from Activity 3B if students need prompting.

- “Now that we’ve learned what STAR is, let’s talk about when you might use it in a situation in your own life.”
- “Each person is going to get a sticky note. Take a minute to think about a recent situation where you had to make a decision that impacted someone else or impacted your relationship with someone else and write it down on the sticky note. We will pick a few sticky notes at random to talk about, so don’t write down any names or include anything you wouldn’t want to share with the class. Once you’ve written a situation on your sticky note, fold it up and place it in the bag.”

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

- **Divide the class into small groups and have one person from each group pick a sticky note from the bag.**
- **Give each group a flip chart paper and have them work together** to answer the following questions (posted on the STAR Activity slide) about how they would think through their situation.
  - Who does this decision impact?
  - How might your relationship with that person [those people] change depending on what you do or say?
  - Can any of the values that are “most important to you” help you decide what to do?
  - What would be the best outcome from your decision? [How do you want this situation to resolve?]
- **After about 5-8 minutes, bring the class back together and have one person from each group share what they wrote on their flip chart paper.**

### Activity 3D: Reflection to Go

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 3 into two sections.\**



- “Between today and our next class, I want you to practice reflecting by doing one of two things:
  - Try to use STAR to help you make a decision. Was there a certain step you found easy or hard?
  - Think about a time when STAR would have been helpful.
- We’ll start next class by sharing some examples.”

### Lesson 3.2:

#### Activity 3E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview

(5 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 3 into two sections.\**



- “Last class we talked about using STAR to make careful, thoughtful decisions.”
- **Ask for volunteers to remind the class what STAR is and what each letter stands for. Refer to STAR slide.**
- **Ask for a few volunteers to share an example of when they used STAR to make a decision since the last lesson.** Students can also share examples of a time they didn’t use STAR to make a decision, but now wish they had.
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 3:**
  - The STAR decision making tool can help you make decisions that are in line with your values.

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- STAR slide
- Key Message slide

## Activity 3F: Novella (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 3

- “Now let's see an example of a decision that one of our novella characters is facing and help her THINK about what to do.”
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter.**
- “Let’s talk about how Dani should react.”
- “What should Dani do first?”
  - Stop and take a moment to think!

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

This is a long activity—consider doing a quick energizer to get students up and moving for a minute or two before you start the discussion!

Allow student responses to drive the discussion. If students need prompting, provide examples below to encourage responses and discussion.

It may be helpful to write down student answers on a whiteboard, flipchart, or PowerPoint slide to keep track of what students have suggested for each question.

Key Question	If students need prompting, consider these examples
What are <b>Dani's options</b> - what are the different ways she could respond?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach Asia and ask if she knows anything about the text</li> <li>• Confront Asia and accuse her of sending the text</li> <li>• Retaliate against Asia in some way (e.g., spread a rumor about her and Jayden)</li> <li>• Confide in someone (e.g., her mother, another friend, or the school counselor)</li> <li>• Don't tell anyone about what happened</li> </ul>
What are the <b>possible consequences of each option</b> (pros and cons)? How might Dani's decision impact herself and others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Dani asks Asia if she knows anything about the text, she's giving Asia the opportunity to share her side of the story, without assuming Asia had anything to do with it. But, Asia might not tell the truth.</li> <li>• If Dani confronts Asia and accuses her of sending the text, she's making an assumption that she knows what happened. She could be wrong and could hurt Asia and also make her angry.</li> </ul>
Are any of these options <b>in line with Dani's values</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we know about Dani's driving values?</li> <li>• Which options are out of line with those driving values?</li> </ul>
Where could Dani go for <b>help or advice</b> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her mom</li> <li>• DeQuan</li> <li>• The school counselor</li> </ul>

- “After thinking through her situation, what do you think Dani should do next? Why?”

## Novella Chapter 3: Dani's Birthday Part 1



Dani



Asia



DeQuan



Jayden

Dani, Asia, and DeQuan have lunch together every day. However, one day when Dani and DeQuan went into the lunchroom, Asia was already sitting with another girl and Jayden, a

boy from their English class. Dani asked DeQuan, "Should we go over to the table where Asia is sitting?" DeQuan just shrugged his shoulders, "Na, let's just eat. Asia's acting mad rude." Dani felt surprised at what DeQuan said. Dani had noticed that Asia wasn't texting as much as usual.

Dani's birthday is in a few weeks. Dani planned to invite DeQuan and Asia to her birthday at lunch. But then Asia was sitting at another table and DeQuan just seemed mad about something. During lunch, Dani kept looking over at the table where Asia was eating. They were all talking a lot – and Asia was whispering and laughing. Dani told herself that she should just go over to the table and talk to Asia. But then she felt butterflies in her stomach. DeQuan quickly ate his lunch and left saying, "I'm dipping. See you after school."

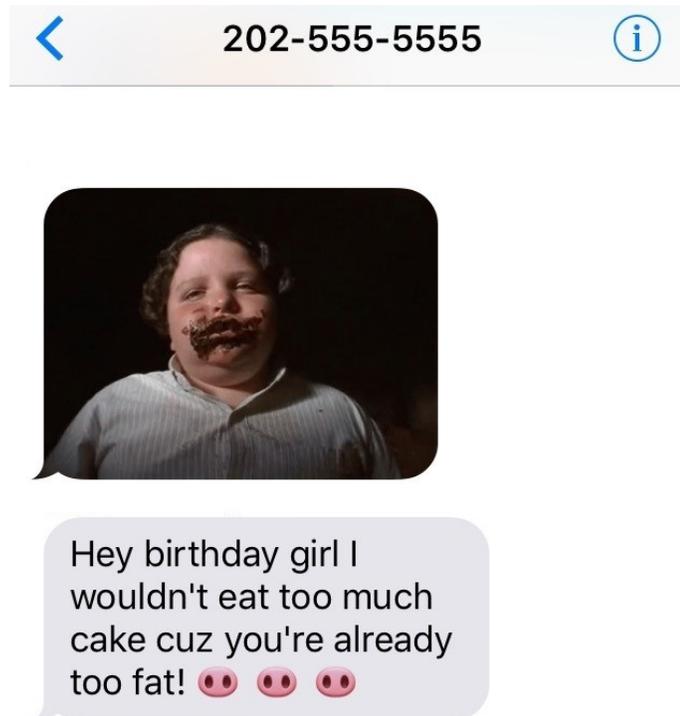
That evening Dani told her mother that she didn't have time during school to invite Asia and DeQuan to the birthday dinner. Dani's mother joked with her about wanting to go to dinner at McDonald's – Dani's favorite place to eat when she was little. "So mija, which McDonald's are we going to this time?" Dani usually laughed, but this time she was quiet. Dani's mother asked her what was wrong – when her mother was serious, she always spoke to Dani in Spanish. Dani told her mother that she just felt tired.

That evening, Dani texted Asia and DeQuan.



After she sent the text, Dani had a lot of feelings – sadness, a little angry, and embarrassed. She thought that she had never felt this way before about Asia.

Later that same evening, Dani heard her phone beep. She didn't recognize the number. Dani hesitated but opened the message.



Dani felt a rush of cold wash over her. Her heart beat faster, and her hands felt clammy. She knows that she only texted two people – DeQuan and Asia. Dani also knows that DeQuan would never call her fat.

### Activity 3G: Reflection to Go (5 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- ☐ Index Card (*prepare red light/green light in advance*)

- “To wrap up today, I’m going to pass each of you an index card. Next to the **Red Light** I’d like you to write the thing you find most difficult when making a decision, and next to the **Green Light** I’d like you to write the thing you find most helpful when making a decision.”

# Lesson

# 4

## First: Stop

### OVERVIEW

#### Lesson 4 Synopsis

In *Lesson 4*, students will learn about the physiological signs of stress and how noticing when they feel stress can help them stop and think about the situation they are in. Students will brainstorm different strategies they can use when experiencing stress.

#### Lesson 4 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Identify at least one physiological sign of stress.
- Identify at least one strategy to help them stop before responding to interpersonal challenges, both in-person and online.
- Identify at least one reason why it's important to stop and think when under stress.

#### Key Message

- Noticing how you feel can help you *STOP* so that you can take the time to make a decision you feel good about.

#### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- 6-8.1.5.14 Identify appropriate responses to personal emotional triggers, including impulse control.
- 6-8.1.7.18 Demonstrate the ability to use stress relieving techniques.

### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

-  Sticky notes
-  Stress Responses handout (1 per group or 1 per individual)
-  Stress Response signs (choose four)
-  Novella Chapter 4
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

### LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

#### Lesson 4.1

4A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (5 min)

4B: Breathing Exercise (3 min)

4C: Stress Responses (22 min)

#### Lesson 4.2

4D: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 min)

4E: Stopping Strategies (6 min)

4F: Reacting Online vs In-person (10 min)

4G: Novella (10 min)

4H: Reflection to Go (2 min)

## Lesson 4 Procedures

### Lesson 4.1:

#### Activity 4A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (5 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- STAR slide
- Key Message slide



- “Last time we talked about using STAR to make thoughtful decisions when we’re in a situation where our words or actions might impact another person or impact our relationship with another person.”

- **Ask for volunteers to remind the class what STAR is and what each letter stands for. Refer to STAR slide.**



- “Today, we’re going to learn more about the first step to making decisions we can feel good about. Let’s read the key messages for Lesson 4 together.”

- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 4:**
  - Noticing how you feel can help you *STOP* so that you can take the time to make a decision you feel good about.

#### Activity 4B: Breathing Exercise (3 minutes)



- “The first step to making good decisions is all about noticing things. Let’s spend a few minutes to notice our breathing. If it helps you to concentrate, you can close your eyes, or look at something like your desk or the wall. Do what makes you feel most comfortable. Now, I want us to all take some deep breaths together. “
- “Let’s all breathe deeply together, taking a breath in 2,3,4,5,6,7,8, and now breathing out, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8.” **[Repeat for ~5-8 breaths.]**
- “Now, keep breathing at your own pace. And as you take each breath in and each breath out, I want you to think about your breath. Where do you feel it? Can you feel your breath in your nose? Do you feel your breath on top of your lip? What does the air feel like? Does it feel cool when you breathe in and warm when you breathe out? Do you feel your shoulders rise as you take a breath in, or maybe your stomach expands?”
- “Does anyone want to share how they feel? What did it feel like to notice your breath?”

## Activity 4C: Stress Responses (22 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Stress Responses handout
- Stress Responses slide
- Stress Response signs
- Sticky notes

- “Last week we learned that the first step to making a good decision is to STOP. This is important because we often need time to think, and because we need to first **notice** that there is a decision facing us!”
- “Before we learn about different strategies to help us STOP, we’re going to focus on the different ways your body might feel when you are experiencing stress. You might feel these when you are facing a big decision and they can serve as a sign that you need to STOP before acting.”
- “We are going to do an activity that will help you identify some of these signs.”
- **Pass out one Stress Responses handout to each group.**

### TEACHER’S NOTE

This activity can also be done as individual work. Consider ahead of time if the students in your class work better in groups or if they might feel more comfortable working by themselves. If working individually, give each student a handout.

In selecting an example, consider which one might resonate most with the students in your class.

### GROUP ACTIVITY (2-3 STUDENTS PER GROUP)

- “I am going to read you an example. This example is meant to help you feel the way your body might respond when you are experiencing stress.”
- **Possible examples:**
  - What if I told you right now that we are about to have a pop quiz? You have 5 minutes to answer 25 questions, and when you are done, I will randomly call on each of you to explain how you solved one of the problems.
  - What if you just sent a message to your crush telling them how you feel? They have started typing a response because you can see the three little dots on your phone screen. Then, the three little dots disappear, and you have been left on “Read.”
  - What if you and your best friend made plans to sit together at lunch? As you enter the cafeteria, you notice that your friend is sitting with another group of friends and there is no space for you.
- “I’d like you to use this person outline to show how that might make you feel. As a group, place a mark of some kind (e.g., an X, a scribble) on the places in your body where you might feel signs of stress.”

- **[When you see that students are finished:]** “Next, fill in the “thought bubbles” for this person, writing words or drawing pictures, showing the thoughts that might pop into your head if that really happened.”
- **[When you see that students are finished:]** “Now let's hear about some of the different ways your body might feel and your thoughts to this imaginary situation.”

## INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY



- “Sometimes these signs of stress are hard to notice, because we’re also dealing with strong emotions, such as anger, sadness, joy, or excitement. It can be hard to think about when you’re in the moment! Let’s think a bit more about some of the ways our bodies might feel and when we might have felt that way before.”
- “Around the room are four examples of ways your body might feel when you are experiencing stress. I want you to choose **one** of these examples to reflect on.”
- “Each one of you will receive two different colored sticky notes. I will ask you two questions, one at a time.”
  1. Label your first sticky note with #1, and refer to **the example stress response you chose:**
    - a. Write down one situation that has made you feel this way before.
  2. Label your second sticky note with #2, answer the following question **about the situation you wrote down:**
    - a. When you were in this situation, what were some things that were going through your mind?
- “When you are done writing down your answer, you may get up and stick the sticky note on the stress response you chose.”
- **Ask for volunteers to share the answers.**

## TEACHER’S NOTE

**Before class**, choose 4 stress responses (examples below) that students might experience. Write each response on a different piece of paper. **After** students have shared their responses to the “Stress Responses handout,” place/stick these around the room. Refer to the Stress Responses slide so students have a visual of the examples and the questions.

**This is a long activity—consider doing an energizer to get students up and moving for a minute or two before doing the individual activity.**

## EXAMPLES OF STRESS RESPONSES

- Nauseated/sick to stomach
- Like there's a brick in stomach
- Tightness in chest
- Trouble breathing
- Hot
- Clenching fists
- Sweaty hands
- Pounding/racing heart
- Shaky legs
- Butterflies in stomach
- Need to use the bathroom

*\*Closure statement, if you are splitting Lesson 4 into two sections.\**



- “Next time we meet, we will keep talking about the different ways our bodies might feel when we are experiencing stress and discuss strategies that can help us stop ourselves before we react.”

## Lesson 4.2:

### Activity 4D: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 4 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide



- “Last time we identified different ways our bodies might feel when we are experiencing stress, situations that make us feel that way, and what goes through our minds when we are feeling that way.”
- “Today, we are going to talk about different strategies we can use to stop ourselves from reacting immediately when we are experiencing these feelings. We are also going to talk about our novella characters and how they deal with similar situations.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 4:**
  - Noticing how you feel can help you *STOP* so that you can take the time to make a decision you feel good about.

### Activity 4E: Stopping Strategies

(6 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Stopping Strategies slide



- “It’s hard to notice the ways your body might be telling you to pay attention to something. But there are some helpful strategies that we can use to practice stopping and give ourselves the space to think before we react.”
- “What are some strategies or techniques that you think could help you to stop, once you notice that you are experiencing stress?”

#### EXAMPLES OF STOPPING STRATEGIES

- Breathe slowly/stretch
- Step away from the situation
- Write/draw/other creative activities
- Listen to music
- Exercise/go for a walk
- Talk to a friend

- **Hint:** “Last class/earlier we did some breathing exercises to help us relax.”
- **Once students have shared some suggestions, refer to the Stopping Strategies slide.**



- “Has anyone tried one of these strategies? Did you find it helpful?”

### TEACHER'S NOTE

Students may not find all of these strategies helpful, and that's okay. These strategies can help create space from a stressful situation and allow students to think about what is bothering them. Sometimes though, students will need to respond to a situation more immediately. Let students know that we'll be learning about more strategies (assertive communication and boundary setting) to help them do this.

## Activity 4F: Reacting Online vs In-Person

(10 minutes)

- “In a moment, I am going to split you all into two groups – an online and in-person group. In your groups, I’m going to ask you to close your eyes—if you feel comfortable doing that—and imagine a situation that I will describe to you.”
- **Split students into two groups: online and in-person.**

### ONLINE GROUP

- “If you feel comfortable, please close your eyes. I'd like everyone in the **online group** to imagine themselves in the following situation:
  - You just received a text message from a friend, saying that someone you know is posting things online about you that aren't true.”

### IN-PERSON GROUP

- “If you feel comfortable, please close your eyes. I'd like everyone in the **in-person group** to imagine themselves in the following situation:
  - Your friend comes up to you in the cafeteria. She tells you that she heard someone in the lunch line say something about you that is not true.”
- **Ask each group to think about what they would do immediately in that situation.**
- **After each group has had a minute to think, ask:**
  - Based on our previous lesson on stress responses, what are some ways your body might feel if you were in that situation?
  - To the students in the **online group**: What would your immediate reaction be if you were in that situation?

- To the students in the **in-person group**: What would your immediate reaction be if you were in that situation?
- How might using a stop strategy help you in that situation?
- In which situation would it be more difficult to stop yourself from reacting immediately – in-person or online? Why?
- Do you always understand exactly how you are feeling, right when something first happens?
- Do misunderstandings happen in-person as much as they do online? Why/why not?
- Can online posts be "taken back"? Do they ever really disappear?
- How does using a stop strategy help you make decisions that are in line with your values?

### Activity 4G: Novella (10 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 4

- “Let’s see how our novella characters deal with some of these situations. Last time, we read about Dani and her planning a birthday celebration, only to get a mean text from an unknown number.”
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter.**

### Novella Chapter 4: After School at the Rec



Dani



Asia



DeQuan



Jayden

Dani, Asia, DeQuan, and Jayden go to an after-school program at the rec. Ms. Fisher is the director and she has worked at the rec for many years.

Dani and DeQuan are working on decorating a bulletin board for fall with Ms. Fisher. Dani is concentrating on cutting out paper leaves. DeQuan is putting the leaves on the board, but he is also taping them on Dani’s back. Dani does not feel like joking around. She has been trying to avoid Asia since receiving the text about her party.

Asia is sitting in the homework room working on math. She hates doing homework and is always looking for an excuse to ‘take a break.’ Asia knows that phones aren’t allowed in the homework room, but she sends a text to DeQuan anyway.



DeQuan walks into the homework room and sits at a table on the other side of the room from Asia. He sees Asia’s text but doesn’t respond. A few minutes later, Jayden comes over to Asia and starts joking around with her. Some of the things Jayden says are funny, but some make Asia feel uncomfortable. As Jayden gets up to leave for basketball practice, he yells to DeQuan, “Hey shorty – come over here.” DeQuan looks at Asia and Jayden and turns his back to them. DeQuan sends a text to Dani.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think Dani is feeling? Any physical reactions? Why or why not?
- What do you think DeQuan is feeling? Any physical reactions? Why or why not?
- What do you think Asia is feeling? Any physical reactions? Why or why not?
- What do you think Jayden is feeling? Any physical reactions? Why or why not?
- Did you notice any of our characters stopping before reacting to a situation?
  - What did that character do?
  - Does any character react in a way that reflects their values?
  - Would you have done anything different in that situation?

## Activity 4H: Reflection to Go

(2 minutes)



- “Between now and next class, I'd like you to do two things:
  - practice noticing the way your body feels when you are experiencing stress
  - practice using one or more of the stopping strategies we discussed today to help you stop before immediately reacting.”
- “Next week, I'll ask you to share what types of feelings you experienced, what stopping strategies you tried, and how well you think they worked.”

# Lesson

# 5

## Biology, Emotions, and Decision Making

### OVERVIEW

#### Lesson 5 Synopsis

In *Lesson 5*, students will learn about aspects of brain development that influence decision making, practice identifying emotions, and evaluate a range of coping strategies.

#### Lesson 5 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Understand that the part of the brain that controls decision making is still developing.
- Understand that at this age, they may rely more on the part of the brain that controls emotions—meaning they may feel emotions stronger than adults do.
- Begin to develop the ability to identify strong feelings or emotions.
- Identify and evaluate ways to cope with one’s own strong feelings or emotions.

#### Key Message

- Learning to manage your emotions can help you make decisions that are in line with your values.

#### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- 6-8.1.1.1 Define hormones and explain how brain development influences emotions during adolescence.
- 6-8.1.5.14 Identify appropriate responses to personal emotional triggers, including impulse control.

### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

 Index cards

 [Video link](#)

 Flip chart paper or white board

 Emotions signs – posted around classroom

 Novella Chapter 5

 Facilitator PowerPoint

### LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

#### Lesson 5.1

5A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 min)

5B: Review Stop Strategies (4 min)

5C: Video – Introducing Brain Development Concepts (6 min)

5D: Exploring Emotions (16 min)

5E: Reflection to Go (2 min)

#### Lesson 5.2

5F: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 min)

5G: How Would You Feel? (12 min)

5H: Novella (14 min)

5I: Reflection to Go (2 min)



# Lesson 5 Procedures

## Lesson 5.1:

### Activity 5A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements Slide
- Key Message Slide



- “Last week we focused on the different ways your body might feel when you are experiencing stress. Being able to identify these feelings can serve as a sign that you need to STOP before making a decision.”
- “Today, we’re going to learn about teen brain development and how it affects your emotions and decision making.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 5:**
  - Learning to manage your emotions can help you to make decisions that are in line with your values.

### Activity 5B: Review Stop Strategies (4 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Stopping Strategies slide



- “Last lesson, we identified some stopping strategies that could help us STOP before making a decision.”
  - What were some of the strategies we identified?
  - Did anyone use a stopping strategy since last class? If so, which one? Did it help?
- “Being able to stop, and not immediately react to a situation, is a really important skill for everyone—no matter what age they are. But it's especially useful when you're in middle school, because of how your brain is growing and developing during this phase of life.”

#### EXAMPLES OF STOPPING STRATEGIES

- Breathe slowly/stretch
- Step away from the situation
- Write/draw/other creative activities
- Listen to music
- Exercise/go for a walk
- Talk to a friend

## Activity 5C: Video – Introducing Brain Development Concepts

(6 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Brain Development video

- “Let’s watch a short video on the teen brain and find out what’s happening for teens around your age. This video uses some big vocabulary to talk about different parts of the brain. There is no need to memorize any vocabulary! Instead, focus on what they have to say about emotions and decision making.”
- Play the video:** [Why the teenage brain has an evolutionary advantage](#) (Stop at 1:37)

### DISCUSSION

- “In this clip, what did you hear about the brain that you found interesting or surprising?” (see **Teacher’s Note for video’s key messages**)
- “Does this mean that young people can’t make good decisions or tell the difference between right and wrong? Why or why not?”
- “When faced with a spur-of-the-moment decision, why can pausing for a moment make a difference?”

### TEACHER’S NOTE – KEY MESSAGES FROM THE VIDEO

The part of the brain responsible for decision making is still developing. Because of this, teens are more likely to react impulsively to situations.

The part of the brain responsible for emotions is already developed, so teens rely on this part of their brain more than adults do. Because of this, teens feel emotions more strongly than adults do.

**Be sure to use closed captions to support ELL students.**

## Activity 5D: Exploring Emotions

(16 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Flip chart paper or white board

- “We just learned that the part of your brain responsible for decision making is still developing and you’re relying a lot on the part of your brain responsible for emotions. This means you might feel emotions much more strongly than an adult would. We’re going to spend the rest of today’s class talking about emotions.”
- “First, what are emotions?” **[Encourage student-generated definitions.]**
  - Provide a definition, if necessary,** e.g., “Something you feel—like a state of mind—in response to an event or thought.”
- “Some examples of emotions include fear, anger, confusion, excitement, disappointment, and embarrassment.”

- “What are some other examples of emotions?” **[Record students' ideas on the white board/flip chart paper, interjecting only if necessary, for instance if a student comes up with something that isn't an emotion.]**
- “Okay, this is a great list! It is important that you know that there is a range of emotions you and others can feel. Getting better at understanding exactly what you are feeling will help you react in a way that is in line with your values.”
- “Also, knowing the different emotions you and others can feel is especially important because it is so common to mask other kinds of hurt feelings (such as sadness or disappointment) with anger. This can affect the way we react and maybe how we treat others who seem angry. So, when others seem angry, maybe just ask if they are okay/how they are feeling, instead of immediately thinking they are angry and treating them based on that.”

## ACTIVITY



- “Now, let's choose 4 of these emotions that we want to talk more about. Which ones interest you most?”
- **Once the class has chosen 4 emotions to examine more in-depth:**
- “I’m going to divide the class up into groups of 3, and secretly assign an emotion to each group. Then, I want each group to create a short (20-30 second) skit or mime to act out the emotion. Make sure everyone in your group has a role. Then we’re going to let the other groups guess the emotion based on facial expressions, body language, or scenario (if you have chosen to use words).”
- **Give groups 5 minutes to work.** Then bring the class back together and have groups present.

## Activity 5E: Reflection to Go

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 5 into two sections.\**

## MATERIALS

- Index cards



- “We just explored a lot of different emotions, and there are many more that we haven’t even talked about. We also know now that, because of how brains develop, teens are likely to feel emotions much more strongly than children or adults. Next class we’re going to see how the novella characters deal with the strong emotions they feel.”
- “Before you go, I am going to hand you an index card. On it, I want you to write down an emotion that you have a hard time managing. This means you may lose your cool or shut down when you feel this emotion. Next time you feel this emotion, try to use one of the stopping strategies and see if it helps you.”

## Lesson 5.2:

### Activity 5F: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 5 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

- “Last time, we talked about how the way our brains develop can affect our emotions and how we make decisions. We learned that teens often feel emotions more intensely than adults because your brains are still developing. We also started talking about different emotions.”
- “Today, we’re going to think about our emotions in different situations and read about how our novella characters deal with their own strong emotions.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 5:**
  - Learning to manage your emotions can help you to make decisions that are in line with your values.

### Activity 5G: How Do You Feel?

(12 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Emotion signs

- “First, we’re going to take some time to imagine how we would feel in different situations. These are situations that might cause us to feel some strong emotions.”
- **Point out the different emotion signs around the room (name each emotion) and explain the “Another emotion” sign.**
- “In a minute, I’m going to ask you to stand up. I’m going to ask how you would feel in a situation that I describe, and you will have 10 seconds to walk to the sign with the emotion that best describes how you would feel. You might feel many different emotions, but for this activity I would like you to pick just one of them. When you pick the emotion, I will ask 1-2 volunteers to share why they would feel that way.”
- **Remind students that this activity is about how they would feel, not how other people would feel, so they should make their choice quietly and individually.**
- **After going through the prompts below, ask students to sit down and discuss the activity.**

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

The “**Another emotion**” sign is for students who might not identify with the six pre-selected emotions. If a student walks to the “**Another emotion**” sign, ask them to share the emotion they would feel, if they feel comfortable doing so.

Based on time, you may select only a few of the prompts.

## HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF...

- ...you were blamed for something you didn't do?
- ...you received a really good grade on a test?
- ...someone that you really want to be friends with invited you to their birthday party?
- ...a friend posted something online that you shared with them privately (a secret, a photo, a video)?
- ...a classmate teased you about your shoes?
- ...you followed a friend on social media, but your friend didn't follow you back?
- ...you found out there was going to be a fight after school?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Was anyone surprised by anything they heard during this activity?
- Of the emotions that we've discussed today, which do you think are most difficult to handle? Why?
- Which do you think are easiest to handle? Why?

## Activity 5H: Novella (14 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 5

- “Now, we are going to talk again about Dani’s birthday, what emotions the characters are feeling, and how they can manage those feelings to make a decision.”
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter.** After each section, ask the corresponding discussion questions.

## Novella Chapter 5: Dani’s Birthday Part 2



Dani

A couple days after getting the strange text, Dani doesn't go to school. She tells her mom that she feels sick. She wants to tell her mom about what happened, but she is afraid her mom will tell her not to use her phone so much. Dani tells herself, “Just don't mess with Asia and her new friends.” But then she starts to think about ways to get back at Asia and make her feel bad.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What emotion(s) does Dani feel when she receives the text? The next day?
- How does she feel physically?
- What can Dani do to manage her feelings and make a decision about how to deal with the situation in a way that reflects her values?

\*\*\*



DeQuan

DeQuan texted Dani and asked why she wasn't at school. He thought she had been kind of quiet at the rec yesterday.



Dani has not replied to DeQuan's messages. DeQuan thinks that he and Dani always share everything. Now she isn't even answering his texts.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What emotion(s) does DeQuan feel when he doesn't receive texts from Dani?
- How does he feel physically?
- What can DeQuan do to manage his feelings and make a decision about how to deal with the situation in a way that reflects his values?

\*\*\*



Asia



Jayden

Asia likes spending time with her new friends but sometimes Jayden makes mean jokes about Dani and DeQuan. Those jokes make Asia's stomach flip-flop. A couple days ago, Asia received a birthday invite from Dani. She was with Jayden at the rec. Jayden saw the text on

Asia's phone and said, "Hey Asia, send me Dani's number so I can wish her a happy birthday." Jayden sent a picture and a message to Dani. Now today, Dani is not in school.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What emotion(s) does Asia feel when she sees what Jayden has done?
- How does she feel physically?
- What can Asia do to manage her feelings and make a decision about how to deal with the situation in a way that reflects her values?

### Activity 5I: Reflection to Go

(2 minutes)



- "At the end of last class **[if lesson was split into two]**, we thought about an emotion that we each struggle to manage. Between today and our next class, I want you to do one of two things:
  - Think about a time when using STAR might have helped you identify strong emotions and respond to a difficult situation in a different way.
  - Try to use STAR to help you make a decision. Think about whether there is a STOP strategy that works best for you when you're dealing with strong emotions."
- "We'll start next class by sharing some examples."

# Lesson 6

## Empathy

### OVERVIEW

#### Lesson 6 Synopsis

In *Lesson 6*, students will learn what empathy means, discuss behaviors that can demonstrate empathetic listening, and practice being empathetic with their peers.

#### Lesson 6 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Define empathy and explain how developing a sense of empathy leads to maintaining positive relationships.
- Identify and practice actions and responses that demonstrate empathy in real-life situations.

#### Key Message

- Empathy means understanding or identifying with another person's feelings or experiences.

#### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- *6-8.1.7.16* Demonstrate healthy ways to express caring, friendship, affection, and love, both verbally and nonverbally.

### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

- Index cards
-  Novella Chapter 6, Part 1
-  Novella Chapter 6, Part 2
- Character cards
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

### LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

#### Lesson 6.1

6A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (4 min)

6B: Introduction to Empathy (4 min)

6C: Take Your Pulse - Am I Empathetic? (10 min)

6D: Novella (10 min)

6E: Reflection to Go (2 min)

#### Lesson 6.2

6F: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (1 min)

6G: Novella (10 min)

6H: Someone Else's Shoes (15 min)

6I: Reflection to Go (4 min)



# Lesson 6 Procedures

## Lesson 6.1:

### Activity 6A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (4 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreement slide



- “Over the last few classes, we’ve been learning about how to make decisions that line up with the values that drive us to be our best selves, using our decision making tool, STAR. Can anyone remind us the four steps in STAR? Has anyone used STAR since last class? Has STAR helped you make decisions? Has using STAR been difficult?”
- “In this lesson, we’re going to talk more about the second step of our decision making tool—THINK. There are many things you can think about before making your decision. Some good questions to think about include:
  - What are your *options*?
  - What are the *possible consequences* of each option (pros and cons)?
  - What option is most *in line with your values*?
  - Where could you go for *help or advice*?
  - When you've been in *similar situations in the past*, what did you do and how did it work out for you?”
- “We’ll keep talking about strategies to help us THINK through our decisions. Today, we’re going to focus on our relationships with others and the importance of THINKING about how our actions and words might affect other people’s feelings, as well as what we can do to try to better understand people.”

#### REVIEW OF STAR AND STOP

**If students need a more detailed review of STAR and the first step, STOP, use the dialogue below:**

STAR stands for Stop. Think. Act on your values. Reflect.

We’ve talked a lot about the first step of decision making—STOP—and we’ve learned that our body often creates signs to show us when we're feeling strong emotions. This is like a signal to us to pay attention and know that we may be facing a decision.

- What kinds of physical signs does our body show us? [*Hot face, cold feet, sweaty palms*]
- Can anyone remember emotions we talked about? What are some strong emotions we might feel?
- What should we do when we're feeling strong emotions and notice our body physically reacting? [*STOP and think about what emotions we're really feeling. Define the problem we're dealing with.*]

## Activity 6B: Introduction to Empathy

(4 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Key Message slide

- “Showing empathy strengthens positive, healthy relationships.”
- “Has anyone heard the word empathy before? What do you think it means?”
- “The word empathy is [also] about showing concern and recognizing others' feelings. But empathy is used much more broadly and in all types of situations. It's a feeling of 'I've been in that same situation' or 'I understand where you're coming from.' We can put ourselves in someone else's shoes to try to understand how they are experiencing a situation.”
- “Showing empathy doesn't mean we change our own values, but it does mean we respect other people's values and feelings.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 6:**
  - Empathy means understanding or identifying with another person's feelings or experiences.

### EMPATHY EXAMPLE

Your best friend tells you that when you were absent yesterday, they didn't have anyone to sit with at lunch and people made fun of them.

Responding *without* empathy: “At least you weren't at home sick like I was.”

Responding *with* empathy: “That sounds really hard. It sounds like you were lonely. I wish I could have been there with you. I missed hanging out with you yesterday too.”

### TEACHER'S NOTE

Empathy is a challenging concept. If you have additional time, consider additional ways to help students define empathy, such as a y-chart (looks like, feels like, sounds like) or a t-chart (is, is not).

For Activity 6C below, consider using a structured share rather than a whole class discussion to support students who struggle to share. Some options include [numbered heads together](#), [jigsaw share](#), or a [whip-around share](#).

## Activity 6C: Take Your Pulse - Am I Empathetic? (10 minutes)



- “Let's take a few minutes to see how often we act in ways that are empathetic.” **Ask students to put their heads down. They may close their eyes, if they feel comfortable.**
- “I am going to read a few statements. If the statement describes you, raise your hand. If it doesn't describe you, you can keep your hand down.”
  - I often think about other people's feelings.
  - I don't make fun of other people because I can imagine what it feels like to be in their shoes.
  - I listen to others about what they're going through.
  - I try to understand other people's point of view.
  - I am aware that not everyone reacts to situations the same way I do.
- “If you raised your hand more often, you are probably comfortable showing empathy to others. If you didn't raise your hand as often, there are some things you could do to be a more empathetic person. This doesn't make you a bad person. We're all born with empathy; it is just a skill that takes practice.”

### CLASS DISCUSSION



- “Let's talk a little more about what empathy means. We have talked in earlier lessons about our personal values and our personal identities. But other people don't always know us the way we know ourselves, and it can be frustrating to feel misunderstood.”
- “Can anyone give an example of a time when you wished someone understood how you felt? Maybe you felt like no one could understand how you felt because no one has been through the same experience, or maybe you just wished a certain person (such as your best friend, your mom) understood how you felt. What did you do?” **[Examples: being the new kid in school, not having anyone to sit with at lunch, not making the team]**
- “Can anyone give an example of a time you saw a friend dealing with something, and you knew exactly how they felt because you'd been through the same thing?”

- “One way that we can step into someone else's shoes is to ask ourselves, ‘how would I feel if this were happening to me?’ What other ways could we understand how someone is feeling?” **[One great way to understand how someone is feeling is to ask them, ‘How are you feeling?']**
- “One of the best ways to understand another person's point of view is to listen to them share their experience. What are some of the behaviors you could use to show that you're being an empathetic listener?”
- **Write down students’ suggestions to reference during Activity 6H.**

#### EXAMPLE BEHAVIORS TO SHOW EMPATHETIC LISTENING

- Making eye contact
- Nodding/body language
- Not interrupting
- Asking follow-up questions

### Activity 6D: Novella (10 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 6, Part 1

- “Let's check in on our novella and learn a little more about Jayden. After we read today's novella together, we'll talk about what Jayden is going through and how the actions of each person affect their relationships with others.”
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter.**

### Novella Chapter 6, Part 1: Jayden’s Story



Jayden

Jayden lives with his foster parents. Jayden’s mom died two years ago from cancer. Jayden tells everybody that his father lives in Virginia – but, Jayden isn’t really sure where his father lives. The last he heard about his father, his mother told him that he was “in jail where he belongs.” When Jayden first went into foster care, he stopped going to school and was caught shoplifting. He spent a month in juvenile detention.

He likes his new foster parents. His foster mother, Ms. Renee, always helps him with his homework. Jayden is really good at math, but he has a hard time with reading. Jayden wants to do better in school this year and play on the school basketball team.

One day after school, Jayden got into a fight at the rec with one of the boys on his basketball team. Ms. Renee asked Jayden what happened and listened to his side of the story. Ms. Renee told Jayden he had to learn to control his temper. She said she understood that he still felt very sad about his mother becoming sick and dying. She also said she worried about him – that he would get hurt or would hurt somebody if he gets into fights.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who in this story shows empathy for Jayden? How do they show their understanding and concern for Jayden?
- If you were Jayden, how would you want someone to show empathy to you? What would you want another person to say or do?

### Activity 6E: Reflection to go (2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 6 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- “Today we talked about how empathy can help you think about how another person may be feeling. Take a minute to answer the following question on an index card:
  - How can using empathy change how you interact with other people?”

## Lesson 6.2:

### Activity 6F: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (1 minute)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 6 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

- “Last time we talked about what empathy is and reflected on whether we are comfortable showing empathy or if we might need a bit more practice. Can anyone remind us what empathy means?”
- “Today, we are going to have a chance to practice being empathetic to others and use the behaviors we identified last class that show we are empathetic listeners.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 6:**
  - Empathy means understanding or identifying with another person's feelings or experiences.

#### EMPATHY DEFINITION

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

## Activity 6G: Novella (10 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 6, Part 2

- “Last time, we learned some more information about Jayden. Today, we are going to learn about DeQuan. After we read today's novella together, we'll talk about what DeQuan is going through and how the actions of each person affect their relationships with others.”
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter.**

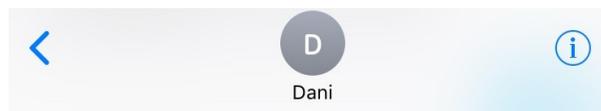
## Novella Chapter 6, Part 2: DeQuan's Story



DeQuan

DeQuan feels that ever since starting middle school, things have not been the same. He and Asia are not talking at all anymore. And Dani is so busy thinking about what is going on with Asia that she hardly listens to anything DeQuan has to say. In the past, DeQuan and Dani shared everything. DeQuan felt that Dani was the only person he could really share his feelings with – including when he told her that he felt more attracted to boys than girls. DeQuan remembered Dani giving him a hug and saying, “you know I have your back.”

Now DeQuan's mom and step-father have been fighting a lot. DeQuan's mom told him that his step-father is moving out. DeQuan does not have a good relationship with his step-father, but he can see his mother is upset. DeQuan hasn't been going to the rec much lately. After school, he just goes home and plays his drums and listens to music. DeQuan was surprised when Dani suddenly texted him.



Hey dequan! You ok?

Haven't talked much

I'm home and my mom is baking cookies, come over!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who in this story shows empathy for DeQuan? How do they show their understanding and concern for DeQuan?
- If you were DeQuan, how would you want someone to show empathy to you? What would you want another person to say or do?

## Activity 6H: Someone Else's Shoes (15 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Character cards

- “Now that we’ve thought about how we might want someone to show empathy to us if we were Jayden or DeQuan, let’s practice what we've learned about being empathetic.”
- “For this activity, you will be given a card with a difficult situation and have a chance to share the experience of the character on your card.”
- “You will work in pairs, and each person will take a turn explaining the situation on their card, while their partner listens and responds using empathy. Using the script on your card, explain to your partner what your situation is and how it is making you feel.”
- **Break students into pairs.** Pass out a character card to one person in each pair and give students 4 minutes to do their roles.
- **After five minutes, pass out a character card to the other person in each pair and give students 4 minutes to switch roles.**
- **After each partner has had a turn, ask:**

### TEACHER'S NOTE

It may be helpful to walk through an example with a co-teacher, student, or on your own to model how the activity will go for students.

- Can anyone share how their partner showed empathy towards you?
- How did their words or actions make you feel?
- Do you wish your partner had done anything differently?

## Activity 6I: Reflection to Go (4 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- “I’d like us to spend the last few minutes reflecting on what we’ve learned about empathy. Take a minute to answer the following question on an index card:
  - How do you think using empathy could help you to use STAR to make a decision?”

# Lesson

# 7

# Assertive Communication

## OVERVIEW

### Lesson 7 Synopsis

In *Lesson 7*, students will learn about assertive communication and practice using assertive communication skills to communicate important information. They will consider how assertive communication demonstrates respect for another person and why it's a key part of healthy relationships.

### Lesson 7 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Define assertive communication.
- Explain why assertive communication is helpful.
- Identify at least one assertive communication technique.

### Key Message

- Assertive communication is an important tool for solving conflicts and maintaining healthy relationships.

### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- 6-8.3.4.15 Applying an assertive communication model to demonstrate effective ways to communicate personal boundaries within friendships and romantic relationships.
- 6-8.2.6.17 Develop and apply personal conflict-resolution strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts.

## MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

-  Index cards
-  Novella Chapter 7
-  Blank paper
-  Role Play Activity handout
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

## LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

### Lesson 7.1

7A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (4 min)

7B: Assertive Communication (12 min)

7C: Novella (12 min)

7D: Reflection to Go (2 min)

### Lesson 7.2

7E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 min)

7F: Role Play and Discussion (20 min)

7G: Reflection to Go (7 min)



# Lesson 7 Procedures

## Lesson 7.1:

### Activity 7A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (4 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide



- “To get us started today, does anyone have an example of how they have used STAR since last class?” **Take 1-2 student examples.**
- “Last lesson, we talked about empathy, and how it can help us to THINK through how our decisions might affect others. Can anyone remind us what empathy is?” **[The ability to understand and share the feelings of another; stepping into the shoes of another person to think about how they might be feeling.]**
- “We’ve spent several classes talking about the first two steps of our decision making tool—STOP and THINK. Can anyone remind us what comes next?” **[Act on your values.]**
- “Once you’ve made a decision, following through on it can sometimes be the hardest part. But since you’ve spent time thinking through your options and what choices will best support you and line up with your values, it is important to act on those choices.”
- “Over the next couple of classes, we’re going to learn about how to follow through on our decisions by ACTING ON OUR VALUES. We’re going to learn about some tools that can help us do this. Today we’re going to talk about assertive communication, which is a way to communicate your thoughts or feelings in a way that is calm, respectful, and clear. Knowing what you stand for and the values that drive you to be your best self will help you to make decisions and communicate them assertively.”

#### REVIEW OF STAR AND THINK

**If students need a more detailed review of STAR and the second step, THINK, use the dialogue below:**

STAR stands for Stop. Think. Act on your values. Reflect.

Last class we talked about the second step of decision making—THINK. There are many things you can think about before making your decision. Some good questions to think about include:

- What are your *options*?
- What are the *possible consequences* of each option (pros and cons)?
- What option is most *in line with your values*?
- Where could you go for *help or advice*?
- When you've been in *similar situations in the past*, what did you do and how did it work out for you?"

When we’re facing a decision that might impact another person or impact our relationship with another person, it is important to THINK about how our actions and words might affect other people’s feelings, as well as what we can do to try to better understand people.

- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 7:**
  - Assertive communication is an important tool for solving conflicts and maintaining healthy relationships.

## Activity 7B: Assertive Communication (12 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Assertive Communication Techniques slide

- “There are many ways to say things, to get your point across, but some styles of communication help you communicate more clearly and more respectfully. This can help you to build stronger, healthier relationships.”
  - “Today we’re going to talk about assertive communication. Can anyone tell us what it means to be assertive?”
    - **Confident, bold, authoritative, firm, determined, self-assured**
    - **Assertive communication means being able to stand up for yourself or others in a way that is calm, direct, and positive.**
  - “Assertive communication is the best way to express what you need or what you're feeling in a way that respects yourself and respects the other person while staying true to your personal values. It allows you to communicate without being aggressive and without passively accepting something that doesn't feel right.”
  - “So, what does it look like to communicate confidently, boldly, and firmly?”
    - You're standing in line at the movie theater and a latecomer tries to cut into the line in front of you. You say, “The end of the line actually starts back there.”
    - A video of a fight at school is going around. A friend sends you a link to watch it and tells you to share it. You might say, “It stresses me out watching that kind of thing. I'm just not interested in watching it.”
  - “Now let's talk about some techniques you can use to help you communicate assertively.” **Refer to Assertive Communication Techniques slide.**
1. **I-Statements: “I \_\_\_\_, when you \_\_\_\_”**
    - “Earlier in El Camino, we talked about stopping to understand what you're feeling, which is an important part of being an assertive communicator. Once you know how you're feeling or what you need, you can use an “I-statement” to describe how another person's actions affected you.”

- Examples:
  - “I feel left out when you like other people’s Instagram posts but not mine.”
  - I saw...
  - I felt...
  - I need...
  - I would like...

## 2. Calmly repeat yourself

- “If another person continues to push back on the decision you’re making, you may need to calmly repeat yourself to set the rules and expectations. This can help you stick to your decision without provoking the other person.”
- Example: After seeing Maria's selfie on Instagram, Josiah sent her a DM:

*Josiah:* Hey nice post. Have any other pics to send me? 😊

*Maria:* No, I don't send pictures like that

*Josiah:* Come on, it's no big deal. Everyone else does it anyway.

*Maria:* Well, I don't send those kinds of pictures.

## 3. Show empathy

- “Think about how you would like the other person to respond to you. Put yourself in their shoes.”
- “Can anyone remember the techniques we talked about to show empathetic listening?”
- “Assertive communication is firm and clear, but open. You may benefit from asking how the other person feels or from asking clarifying questions. It is also OK to show that you understand their point of view, but that yours is different or you disagree.”

## 4. Calm body language

- “Make eye contact and stay calm to show the person you’re talking to that you are having a serious conversation.”
- “Why do you think it’s important to communicate calmly? What does calm look like to you?”
- “Assertive communication doesn’t always come naturally for everyone—it takes practice. Does anyone think they’ve used assertive communication before? Can you share an example? Which of the assertive communication techniques did you use?”
- “Now let's go back to our novella characters and see how they can use assertive communication.”

## OTHER COMMUNICATION STYLES

If time allows, older students may benefit from a more in-depth discussion of different communication styles; however, please note that passive-aggressive may be a challenging concept. We recommend you only introduce this communication style if you feel your students have a good grasp of the other communication styles.

There are four main styles of communication: Passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive.

### Aggressive:

- Expressing your feelings or opinions in a way that hurts other people.
- For example, when Amara asked Gabrielle whether she would mind Amara going out with her ex-boyfriend, Isaac, Gabrielle said "You're just as desperate as Isaac, you two deserve each other!"

### Passive:

- Not expressing your feelings or opinions, often letting them build up silently.
- For example, when Amara asked Gabrielle whether she would mind Amara going out with her ex-boyfriend, Isaac, Gabrielle sighed and said, "It doesn't really matter to me."

### Passive-aggressive:

- Expressing your feelings indirectly instead of openly. Sounding passive on the surface but then acting out your anger in other ways.
- For example, when Amara asked Gabrielle whether she would mind Amara going out with her ex-boyfriend, Isaac, Gabrielle said "Fine, it doesn't matter to me." But after Gabrielle saw Amara and Isaac together the next day, Gabrielle began avoiding Amara and not responding to her texts.

### Assertive:

- Expressing your feelings or opinions in a way that shows respect for yourself and others.
- For example, when Amara asked Gabrielle whether she would mind Amara going out with her ex-boyfriend, Isaac, Gabrielle said "I know you really like Isaac, but if you went out with him it would make me feel like you care about him more than me."

### For each style:

- Have you ever used this communication style or been on the receiving end of it?
- How do you feel when you use this communication style?
- How do you feel when a friend uses this communication style with you?

## Activity 7C: Novella (12 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 7

- “We have two short scenes where our novella characters need to use assertive communication. I’m going to split you into pairs and each pair will talk through how the characters in their scene could respond to a situation that is out of line with their personal values.”
- “You will have 5 minutes to discuss your scene with your partner and write down how your characters would respond. Then we’ll come back together to discuss.”

## Novella Chapter 7: Scenes

### JAYDEN AFTER PRACTICE



Jayden

**SCENE 1.** One afternoon after basketball practice, Jayden went to Toni’s carry-out with some of the other players. Stephen is a couple years older than Jayden. Over the summer, Stephen helped Jayden improve his basketball skills. Stephen is a good friend of Jayden’s brother, and Jayden likes hanging out with them. At the store, Stephen walks over to Jayden and sticks a bag of candy into Jayden’s coat pocket.

**Stephen:** C’mon help me out. I don’t have any money today.

**Jayden:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Stephen:** Just this once man.

**Jayden:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*

### DEQUAN AND DANI



DeQuan



Dani

**SCENE 2.** Dani found out Jayden sent her the mean text about her birthday. DeQuan told her that Jayden has also been saying and texting nasty things about him. DeQuan said Jayden needs to learn a lesson. He suggested posting something mean online about him.

**DeQuan:** I’m tired of those two getting on me.

**Dani:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DeQuan:** The only way they will stop is if we do something.

**Dani:** \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Which assertive communication technique or techniques did you decide to use and why?
- Did you find this challenging?
- How might your personal values influence what you say and how you say it?
- Why do you think assertive communication is important for healthy relationships?

### Activity 7D: Reflection to Go

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 7 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- **Ask students to write down** one assertive communication technique they want to use more often OR one situation they've encountered recently where they could have used assertive communication.

## Lesson 7.2:

### Activity 7E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview

(3 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 7 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide



- “Last class we learned about assertive communication and how it is the best way to express what you need or what you're feeling in a way that respects yourself and respects the other person while staying true to your personal values.”
- “Today, we are going to continue talking about assertive communication. You are going to have a chance to continue practicing assertive communication techniques through a role play.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 7:**
  - Assertive communication is an important tool for solving conflicts and maintaining healthy relationships.

## Activity 7F: Role Play and Discussion (20 minutes)

- **Quickly review the Assertive Communication Techniques slide** and answer any questions students may have. It might be helpful to keep the slide up for students to refer to.
- **Divide the class into pairs**, with several pairs assigned to each scenario from the *Role Play Activity handout*.
- **Give each group time to create a script to act out the scenario**, including an assertive response, which they will then role play for the class. Each character should have at least two lines. The scene should incorporate at least one assertive communication technique.
- **Ask for volunteers to present their role play.** Have *at least* one group from each scenario present to the class. As groups present, ask the other students to share feedback on how well they used assertive communication, and if they could have said or done anything differently.

### MATERIALS

- Assertive Communication Techniques slide
- Role Play Activity handout
- Blank paper

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 
- Was it difficult to come up with an assertive response? Why or why not?
  - Which assertive communication techniques did you use and how did you decide on them?
  - Would you have responded differently if you didn't use assertive communication? How?

## Activity 7G: Reflection and Go (7 minutes)

### CLOSURE QUESTIONS

- 
- How do you think showing empathy can help you be a good assertive communicator?
  - How can STAR help you communicate assertively?
  - How do you think assertive communication can help you build healthier relationships?

# Lesson

# 8

# Boundary Setting

## OVERVIEW

### Lesson 8 Synopsis

In *Lesson 8*, students will learn about personal boundaries and boundaries in relationships. They will discuss and identify examples of boundaries being crossed and practice navigating these situations by assertively communicating their boundaries.

### Lesson 8 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Define boundaries.
- Explain the importance of setting and respecting boundaries for healthy relationships.
- Identify strategies to articulate and enforce their own boundaries.

### Key Messages

- Setting boundaries and respecting others' boundaries is part of building healthy relationships.

### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- *6-8.2.4.11* Describe how refusal skills help youth avoid unsafe situations.
- *6-8.3.4.15* Applying an assertive communication model to demonstrate effective ways to communicate personal boundaries within friendships and romantic relationships.
- *6-8.2.6.17* Develop and apply personal conflict-resolution strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts.

## MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

-  Index cards
-  Novella Chapter 8
-  [Video link](#)
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

## LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

### Lesson 8.1

8A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (5 min)

8B: What Are Boundaries? (10 min)

8C: Novella (13 min)

8D: Reflection to Go (2 min)

### Lesson 8.2

8E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 min)

8F: Video and Discussion (7 min)

8G: Role Play (15 min)

8H: Reflection to Go (5 min)



# Lesson 8 Procedures

## Lesson 8.1:

### Activity 8A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (5 minutes)



- “We have been talking about STAR—a tool to help us make good decisions. Can anyone share how they’ve used STAR since the last class? Did you feel like it helped you make a better decision?”
- “Last week we learned about assertive communication. Can anyone remind us what assertive communication means? What are some of the techniques we talked about?”
- “Today we are going to think about our boundaries, and what it means when we respect other people's boundaries, and when other people respect ours. Let’s get started by reading our key messages.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 8:**
  - Setting boundaries and respecting others’ boundaries is part of building healthy relationships.

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements Slide
- Key Message Slide

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

Assertive communication means being able to stand up for yourself or others in a way that is calm, direct, and positive.

#### Assertive Communication Techniques:

- I-statements
- Calmly repeat yourself
- Show empathy
- Use calm body language.

### Activity 8B: What Are Boundaries? (10 minutes)



- “First let’s talk about boundaries.”
  - What is a boundary? Does anyone know or can anyone guess what the word boundary means?
  - Why would a person have boundaries?
  - What are some examples of boundaries that a person might have?
  - How do you know when someone is crossing a boundary? How do you feel? *[Hint: Think about the physical signs of stress.]*

#### MATERIALS

- Setting Strong Boundaries slide

- “We’re going to talk more about our personal boundaries today, and while we do, I want us to think about some steps we can take to create strong and healthy boundaries.”
- **Refer to Setting Strong Boundaries slide and talk through each step.**
- **“Know your limits by listening to your body.”**
  - Your body will help you know when your boundaries are being crossed. This might feel like the physical signs of stress that we talked about earlier.
  - You can’t set a limit if you don’t know where you stand. Know your wants and needs. Decide what you are willing to accept and what you are not.”
- **“Remember your values.”**
  - Knowing what’s important to you can help you set your boundaries and act on them.
  - Know that you deserve self-respect and have the right to care for yourself.”
- **“Be direct.”**
  - Communicate your limits assertively. Have a one-on-one conversation with the person you need to set a boundary with. Be clear about what you need while also being respectful of the other person.”
- **“Practice and ask for help.”**
  - We can’t always do it alone. It’s okay to ask for help from a friend or trusted adult.
  - Start small: setting boundaries takes practice. Start with something small and non-threatening (for example, not letting a friend borrow a new piece of clothing or a new gadget before you get to use it).”

## BOUNDARIES

### What is a boundary?

- It’s a personal rule or policy
- It’s a fence or a wall
- It’s a way of letting other people know what you like or don’t like
- It’s a way of keeping you on your Camino

### Why would a person have boundaries?

- Because they were hurt
- Because they want to protect themselves
- Because they don’t trust other people
- It’s a way to tell others what is or is not OK in a relationship (peer, romantic, etc.)

### What are some examples of boundaries that a person might have?

- Telling someone you don’t like hugs and would rather prefer shaking hands
- Saying “no” to someone
- Choosing not to lend your favorite sweater

### How do you know when someone is crossing a boundary? How does it feel?

- Nervous, angry, scared, offended
- Like I want to yell, fight, cry
- Someone might look uncomfortable or not be sure about the situation they are in
- Someone is crossing a boundary when they do or say something you don’t like, and you say “no!” and they keep doing it

## Activity 8C: Novella (13 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 8

- “Let's see how our novella characters deal with people crossing their boundaries.”
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter.**

## Novella Chapter 8: Jayden and Asia



Jayden



Asia

Yesterday while Jayden was doing his homework at the rec, Ms. Fisher caught him on his phone in the homework room. She took his phone away and saw a post Jayden had just written, making fun of DeQuan. Now today, when Jayden arrived for basketball practice, he saw Ms. Fisher talking to Coach. At the end of the practice, Jayden was getting ready to leave when Coach asked to talk with him.

“Jayden, Ms. Fisher told me about what you shared online yesterday. I am afraid that I am going to have to suspend you from the team for the next week. If anyone else on the team is posting these kinds of things and I find out, they are also going to be suspended.”

The next day Jayden saw Asia at the store. She waved at him and said, “Hey Jayden, what are you doing here? No basketball today?”

“I’m tired of the rec. I don’t think I’m going to play ball there anymore. Ms. Fisher and Coach are too much into everybody’s business.”

Asia looked surprised. “What happened?”

“I was just posting some stuff and they are both on my back.”

Asia looked at Jayden in the eyes. “I think some of your posts are funny. But sometimes you take things too far and make me uncomfortable. I know you have said things that have hurt Dani and DeQuan.”

Jayden looked away. “What are you talking about? You’re always laughing at them.” Asia stood up straight and looked at Jayden. “I know, but I shouldn’t have done that. I like hanging out with you, but if you keep posting those kinds of things, I don’t think we can hang out together.”

Jayden looked surprised and then angry. “What is with you, girl? So, don’t hang with me. See if I care. Go back to your little friends.”

Asia continued to walk out of the store with Jayden. “I would miss hanging out with you. I do think you’re funny, but I just can’t be friends with someone who makes fun of people I care about. But it’s your decision what to do.” Jayden said something rude about Asia in a loud voice as he walked away.

Asia had a lot of mixed feelings. But she was sure she had said and done the right thing.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 
- What boundary was set in this part of the novella?
  - Can anyone explain in their own words what happened, and why Asia needed to set a boundary?
  - Did anyone notice particular steps that Asia took in order to set that boundary? [*Refer back to **Setting Boundaries** slide*]
  - Is it ever too late to set a boundary?
  - What might happen next, now that Asia has set a boundary?

## Activity 8D: Reflection to Go

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 8 into two sections.\**

- 
- “Before the closing activity, I would like a volunteer to remind the class what a boundary is and an example of one.”
  - “Now, I’d like each of you to spend some time thinking about a boundary you might need to set in your personal lives. We’ll check in at the start of next class to see if anyone wants to share what they’ve thought about.”

## Lesson 8.2:

### Activity 8E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview

(3 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 8 into two sections.\**

- “Last time we talked about boundaries. Can someone remind me what a boundary is? Why would someone set boundaries?”
- “I also asked you to think about a boundary that you might need to set in your personal lives. Would anyone like to share of a boundary they thought about?”
- “Today we are going to continue talking about boundaries. We are going to watch a video and do a role play to practice setting boundaries.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 8:**
  - Setting boundaries and respecting others’ boundaries is part of building healthy relationships.

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

### Activity 8F: Video and Discussion

(7 minutes)

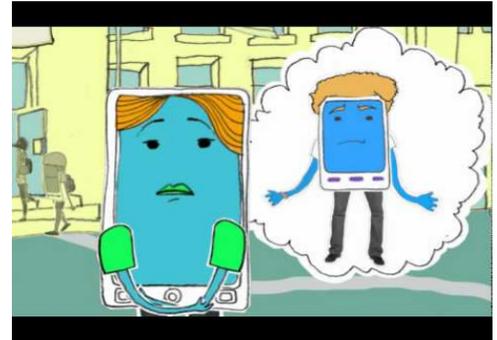
- “We’re going to watch a video where the character is facing a decision about whether or not to set a boundary. Let’s help her figure out what to do!”
- **Show video:** [Beeping](#) (58 sec)

#### MATERIALS

- Video

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Is Henry really crossing one of Stacy's boundaries? If so, what boundary is he crossing? How can we tell?
- What could Stacy do?



#### TEACHER'S NOTE

**Be sure to use the closed captions feature (cc button) to support ELL students.**

This video is from [thatsnotcool.com](http://thatsnotcool.com). If time permits (~5 minutes), consider sharing the site’s "[Cool, Not Cool](#)" quiz with students. It can be projected on the board and used as another "Vote with Your Feet" activity on friends and relationships and identifying when a boundary might need to be set.

## Activity 8G: Role Play (15 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Role Play Questions slide

- “Now, we’re going to do some role plays to practice setting boundaries. I am going to break us up into pairs. One partner will play the role of Stacy, and the other will play the role of Henry. Together, you will write and act out a short (3-4 lines) script where Stacy sets some boundaries to Henry’s behavior. Include:
  - What do you think Stacy should say to Henry?
  - How do you think Henry will respond?
  - What should Stacy say to Henry’s response?”
- **Give students about 5 minutes to write and practice their skit. Each group will have 30 seconds to 1 minute to perform.**
- **After each group performs their skit explore some of these discussion questions:**

- Thinking about the different ways that you and your classmates thought Stacy should handle the situation with Henry, which do you think was least/most realistic (that is, do you think someone might actually handle a similar situation in a similar way)? Why or why not?
- What do you think would be the best choice for Stacy?

### TEACHER’S NOTE

Smaller classes may ask the discussion questions after each group presents their skit. Larger classes should have a full class discussion after all groups have presented their skits. Be sure to keep an eye on performance time based on your class size.

## Activity 8H: Reflection to Go (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- “To wrap us up, I want us to reflect on boundary setting and the way you might feel before and after. I want you to think about the role play or a personal example.”
- “On your index card, answer the following questions:
  - How might you (or Stacy if you choose to reflect on the role play) feel **before** setting a boundary?
  - How might you (or Stacy if you choose to reflect on the role play) feel **after** setting a boundary?”

# Lesson

# 9

## External Influences on Decision Making

### OVERVIEW

#### Lesson 9 Synopsis

In *Lesson 9*, students will continue to practice acting on their values, using assertive communication and boundary setting in response to interpersonal conflict, as a bystander to conflict, and to promote positive digital citizenship. They will consider how external influences, such as peer pressure, might affect their decision making.

#### Lesson 9 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Consider how other people’s words and actions impact their feelings or change the way they relate with others.
- Decide which norms they are and are not comfortable with.
- List small steps they can take (words/actions) to act on their values, using assertive communication, and/or boundary setting.

#### Key Message

- Start with YOU. Your own words and actions can be a positive influence on others.

#### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

- 6-8.1.2.6 Analyze the role and impact of family, society, peers, and the media (particularly social media) on self-image, behaviors, and health practices.

### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

 Index cards

 [Video link](#)

 Novella Chapter 9

 Sticky notes

 Flip chart posters with Green Light and Red Light

 Facilitator PowerPoint

### LESSON AT-A-GLANCE

#### Lesson 9.1

9A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 min)

9B: External Influences on Decision Making (10 min)

9C: Video and Discussion (15 min)

9D: Reflection to Go (2 min)

#### Lesson 9.2

9E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 min)

9F: Novella (10 min)

9G: Green Light/Red Light (15 min)

9H: Reflection to Go (2 min)



## Lesson 9 Procedures

### Lesson 9.1:

#### Activity 9A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide



- “To get us started today, does anyone have an example of how they have used STAR since last class?” **Take 1-2 student examples.**
- “Last lesson, we talked about boundary setting, and how it can help us communicate to others what kinds of words and actions are and are not OK in a relationship (with friends, partners, or family). Can anyone think of an example of a boundary we might set with someone?”
- “Today, we’re going to talk about things that influence our decisions, which means that they may push us to do or say things that we may not otherwise.”
- “Sometimes, the people around us may do or say things that seem normal because everyone is doing it or because it happens all the time. But just because everyone does it or because it happens all the time does not mean that it is actually okay.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 9:**
  - Start with YOU. Your own words and actions can be a positive influence on others.

#### Activity 9B: External Influences on Decision Making (10 minutes)



- “Sometimes the people around us influence the way we act and make decisions. This can be positive or negative. For example, the way you talk or act at school is probably different from the way you talk or act at home. And the way you talk or act with a grandparent may be different from the way you talk or act with your friends.”
  - “Can anyone think of something that might influence your decision making?”  
**[Examples: when all your friends are watching, knowing a parent or teacher will find out, being responsible for your siblings]**
  - “Are there things that your friends or classmates do that influence you to make certain choices? What about siblings or cousins? What about teachers or other adults at school?”

- “People or situations that influence us can be positive or negative. Can anyone think of a positive influence? What about a negative one?”
- “Sometimes behaviors like gossiping, spreading rumors, casual insults, or excluding other people can be seen as normal and okay to people within a group. Can anyone think of ways that this happens within friend groups?”
- “The things that influence our decisions can be positive or negative. So, it’s important to pay attention to those physical signs of stress that your body is sending you. This can be a sign that maybe you’re being influenced by something that doesn’t line up with your personal values.”
- “If you’re in a situation where you notice that something is influencing you in a negative way, what are some strategies you could use to act in a way that makes sense with your values?”

#### REMINDERS

**If students need help thinking of strategies to help avert negative influences on their decision making, remind them of the following:**

##### *Assertive Communication Techniques*

- I-statements (“I \_\_\_\_, when you \_\_\_\_.”)
- Calmly repeat yourself
- Show empathy
- Calm body language

##### *Setting Strong Boundaries*

- Know your limits by listening to your body
- Remember your values
- Be direct

### Activity 9C: Video and Discussion (15 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Video

- “We’re going to watch a video where a character is facing some outside pressure that might influence a decision he might make. Let’s help him figure out what to do!”
- **Show video:** [Pressure Pic Problem - Boyfriend's Story - That's Not Cool](#) (52 sec)
- **Pause at 00:49 and ask students to vote A, B, or C.**



## DISCUSSION

- Whose boundaries were being crossed?
- How do you think Orange would have felt?
- What would you do if you were a bystander to this conversation—another friend—watching this unfold and feeling uncomfortable about it? Would you do anything? If so, what?

### TEACHER'S NOTE

**Be sure to use the closed captions feature (cc button) to support ELL students.**

If students would say something as a bystander, remind them about assertive communication strategies they learned in the previous lesson.

- **Following discussion, if time permits, show students the different outcomes for each answer:**
  - [Answer A](#)
  - [Answer B](#)
  - [Answer C](#)

### Activity 9D: Reflection to Go (2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 9 into two sections.\**

### MATERIALS

- Index cards

- **Ask students to write down** one external influence that might have a negative impact and one that might have a positive impact on their ability to make decisions in line with their values. Provide an index card for students to share their responses.

## Lesson 9.2:

### Activity 9E: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview

(3 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 9 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

- “Last class we started learning about how other people or situations can influence our decisions in positive or negative ways.” **Ask students for positive and negative examples.**
- “Today we’re going to continue talking about things that can influence our decisions. We’ll also reflect on how we can use assertive communication and boundary setting to act in a way that is in line with our values, even if some person or situation might be influencing you to go against your values.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 9:**
  - Start with YOU. Your own words and actions can be a positive influence on others.

### Activity 9F: Novella

(10 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 9

- “Let’s start out by reading about Jayden and how others might influence his decision making. “
- **Ask for volunteer students to read the novella chapter**, then discuss using the questions at the end.

### Novella Chapter 9: Jayden



Jayden

On the weekends, Jayden likes to play NBA 2K. Some of the people he plays with are his school friends. Some are just people he knows online. While they play, they talk and joke around a lot with each other on Discord. One of Jayden’s school friends asks him about the picture he sent to ‘fat Dani’. The friend is laughing and suggests that Jayden post another picture. He says he will send Jayden a picture. When Jayden gets the picture on his phone, he is surprised and embarrassed. He would never post such a picture.

“So, what do you think? Pretty funny, huh?”

Jayden isn’t sure what to say. “I like to post pictures, but this is not funny.”

“What’s the big deal? You are always laughing and telling jokes about Dani and her friend DeQuan. I’ll post it if you don’t.”

Jayden likes playing video games with these friends. But he does not feel comfortable now. He thinks about what Asia told him a few days ago, about taking things too far. “No, don’t post that picture. If you do, I just can’t hang with you.”

Jayden’s friend laughed. “Why are you being so weird? You’re making such a big deal. Whatever, man.”

Jayden was quiet and stopped playing the game. He could still hear everyone enjoying the game and talking. Jayden has a lot of mixed feelings, but he thinks he has said the right thing. Jayden turns off his computer.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In this part of the novella, was Jayden influenced to make a decision he may not have otherwise made?
- Is Jayden’s response in line with his values?
- Who or what influences Jayden’s decision?
- How does Jayden feel after he tells his friend not to post the picture?
- How might Jayden respond to a similar situation in the future, based on this experience?

## Activity 9G: Green Light/Red Light (15 minutes)

- “Let’s take a few minutes to reflect on what kinds of influences we are OK with and what kinds of influences we are not OK with.”

### MATERIALS

- Flip chart poster paper for Green Light and Red Light
- Sticky notes

### TEACHER’S NOTE

You may want to provide the examples below (or your own), to help students understand what they are being asked to write on the sticky notes:

**Positive influence:**

My friend always encourages me to do my homework before we hang out, so I don’t stress.

**Negative influence:**

At lunchtime, everyone always talks about the latest online rumor.

- “You are going to receive two sticky notes. On one sticky note, I want to you write down a positive influence on your decisions that you think you should *continue* allowing. You will stick this one on the Green Light flipchart. On the other sticky note, I want to you to write down a negative influence on your decisions that you think you should *stop* allowing. You will stick this one on the Red Light flipchart. **You do not need to put your name on these.**”
- **After students have placed their sticky notes on the corresponding flip charts, read them aloud to the class or ask a volunteer to do so.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Was it difficult/easy to come up with examples? Why do you think that is?
- Let’s think about the negative influences you said you would like to *stop* allowing. You don’t have to tell me which one is yours unless you feel comfortable doing so. **[Select two good examples of negative influences. For each, ask students the following questions:]**
  - Why would someone want to stop allowing this to influence their decisions?
  - Do you think there are any consequences to allowing it to influence their decision? If so, what kind of consequences?
  - Do you think it will be easy or difficult to stop allowing it to influence their decisions?
  - What are some things they can do to try to stop themselves from allowing it to influence their decisions next time? **[Use assertive communication, set a boundary]**

## Activity 9H: Reflection to Go (2 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Index cards



- “I’d like us to spend the last few minutes reflecting on what we’ve learned about influences on our decisions. Take a minute to answer the following question on an index card:
  - How could using assertive communication or boundary setting help you respond to pressure to make a decision that is not in line with your values?”

# Lesson 10

## Bringing it All Together

### OVERVIEW

#### Lesson 10 Synopsis

In *Lesson 10*, students will reflect on what they've learned over the course of the *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* program. They will learn how they can use reflection to prepare themselves to approach future difficult decisions in their own lives.

#### Lesson 10 Objectives

*At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:*

- Practice reflecting on past decisions.
- Practice planning for future decisions.

#### Key Message

- Taking the time to reflect on past decisions helps us know what we should do differently in the future.

#### OSSE 6-8 Health Standards

None

#### MATERIALS FOR THIS LESSON

-  Index cards
-  Agree/Disagree signs
-  Blank paper
-  Novella Chapter 10
-  Facilitator PowerPoint

#### LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE

##### Lesson 10.1

10A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 min)

10B: Vote with Your Feet (12 min)

10C: Reflection on Decisions (15 min)

##### Lesson 10.2

10D: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (2 min)

10E: Novella (18 min)

10F: Snowball Reflection (10 min)

# Lesson 10 Procedures

## Lesson 10.1:

### Activity 10A: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview (3 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

- “Throughout *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships*, we have discussed using STAR to help you notice when you have a decision to make and to help you make that decision. We have talked about stopping, thinking, and acting, and today we are going to practice REFLECTing on our decisions.”
  - What does it mean to reflect?
  - Why is reflecting an important part of making decisions?
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 10:**
  - Taking the time to reflect on past decisions helps us know what we should do differently in the future.

### Activity 10B: Vote with Your Feet (12 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Agree/Disagree signs
- Vote with Your Feet slide

- “Reflection is something that takes practice. We have practiced reflection at the end of each of our lessons to think about how the skills associated with STOP, THINK, and ACT can help us make decisions we can feel good about. The more we practice reflecting on our decisions to say or do certain things, the easier it is to make good decisions in the future.”
- “Let’s do an activity to get us moving and reflecting on how we each approach decision making.” **Show students the signs hung on the wall: “Agree” or “Disagree.”**
- “I am going to read a few statements to you – one at a time. After I read each statement, I want each of you to decide which sign best fits with how you feel about the statement and then go stand by that sign (that is, vote with your feet). If you are not sure how you want to answer, you can stand in the middle of the room.”
- “After everyone has chosen a position, I am going to ask for a few volunteers standing under different signs to explain why they chose to stand where they are standing. At any

time during the discussion, you can change your mind and move quietly to a new position.”

- “Does anyone have any questions about how the activity is going to work?”

## VOTE WITH YOUR FEET STATEMENTS

### TEACHER’S NOTE

List statements in the order you wish to discuss them. Stick to 10 minutes—this may mean that you cannot use every statement.

1. It’s never too late to change my mind about a decision I’ve made.
2. Sometimes when I’m facing a difficult decision or relationship challenge, I talk to trusted friends or family members about it.
3. If I make a good decision, it should have a good outcome.
4. Sometimes I think back on my past decisions and how they have impacted other people.
5. If I’m not sure what decision to make, I just avoid making the decision.
6. There can only be one right choice in any decision I have to make.

## Activity 10C: Reflection on Decisions (15 minutes)

- “Now, we’re going to practice reflecting on a relationship decision we’ve made and how it impacted our relationship with that person.”
- “I’d like you to take a minute to think quietly about a relationship decision you have made recently and write the situation down on a piece of paper. This situation should be a time when you had to respond to a friend, dating partner, or family member, based on something one of you said or did. You will get to choose whether or not to share this with the rest of the class.”
- “Now, I’m going to ask you to answer three questions about that decision. Please answer each question on your own paper. We’ll take a few minutes to answer each question one at a time.”

### MATERIALS

- Reflection Questions slide
- Blank Paper

### TEACHER’S NOTE

Be sure to give students enough time to think of their scenario and answer each question one at a time. Check if any student needs support before advancing to the next question.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- “There are three questions to ask yourself when you are reflecting on a decision:
  1. Did you stay true to your values in the way you responded? (If yes, which values?)
  2. How did things work out?
  3. What would you do differently in the future, if anything? Why?
- **[Once students have answered all three questions...]**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- “Would anyone like to share the decision they wrote about?”
- “How did your decision affect your relationship with the other person?”
- “How did your decision affect how you felt about yourself?”

***\*Closure statement, if you are splitting Lesson 10 into two sections.\****

- “Next time we meet, we will keep talking about reflection and how practicing reflection can help us to make better decisions. We’ll read more about our novella characters and reflect on what we’ve learned throughout *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships*.”

## Lesson 10.2:

### Activity 10D: Welcome, Review, Lesson Overview

(2 minutes)

*\*Use this activity if you are splitting Lesson 10 into two sections.\**

#### MATERIALS

- Group Agreements slide
- Key Message slide

- “Last class we practiced REFLECTing on our decisions, the final step of STAR. Who can remind us what it means to reflect? Today, we’re going to reflect on the decisions our novella characters have made and also reflect on what we’ve learned throughout *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* that can help us make decisions that support healthy relationships.”
- **Ask for volunteers to read the key message for Lesson 10:**
  - Taking the time to reflect on past decisions helps us know what we should do differently in the future.

### Activity 10E: Novella

(18 minutes)

#### MATERIALS

- Novella Chapter 10

- “Our novella characters have been going through a lot this school year—making new friends, seeing some friendships fade, and making some difficult decisions that have sometimes helped and sometimes hurt their relationships with others. Let’s see how they’ve changed since we first met them.”
- **Ask volunteer students to read the novella chapter.**

## Novella Chapter 10: New and Old Friends

### DEQUAN AND DANI



Dani



DeQuan

All through elementary school, Dani, Asia, and DeQuan were best friends. DeQuan hasn’t really made any new friends in middle school and now Asia and Dani spend less time with him.

Asia spends a lot of time with Jayden and his friends. Sometimes she ignores DeQuan and even laughs when Jayden makes rude jokes about him. It seems like some of the kids in middle school say nasty things just to start a fight. Dani has also met a few new friends. She always waves at DeQuan, but rarely stops to talk to him in school.

One day, Dani was waiting at the bus stop. Dani saw DeQuan walking quickly toward her. She could see a couple of boys from the rec behind DeQuan. They were saying something about DeQuan. Dani thought DeQuan looked like he was about to cry. Dani felt sad and angry. As soon as DeQuan came close to the bus stop, Dani walked over to him, grabbed his arm, and said,

“Don’t listen to them. Let’s grab a couple slices of pizza and go back to my house. I’ve missed spending time with you.”

## ASIA AND JAYDEN



Asia



Jayden

Asia liked having lunch and going to Toni’s carry-out after school with Jayden. She felt like she was growing up, and Jayden made her laugh. However, the other day she was with Jayden and he told her about how Ms. Fisher and Coach were getting on him about his posts. Then Jayden got mad at her and said something nasty about her.

A few days later, Asia saw Jayden hanging out after school in front of the rec. As usual, he was looking down at his phone and didn’t see her walking by.

Asia felt hesitant to say anything but stopped anyway. “Hey Jayden. Watcha doing?” Jayden looked up. Asia thought he might say something rude or make a joke. Instead, he looked unhappy and just shook his head.

Asia continued talking. “Let’s go inside. We can get started on that English project that’s due on Friday.”

“I don’t want to see Ms. Fisher and Coach. They’re just gonna give me a hard time.”

Asia looked directly at Jayden. “That’s not true. I know them both. Come on. What’s the basketball team going to do without you there?”

Jayden shrugged his shoulders and stuck his phone in his pocket. “Okay. I’ll give it a try.”

As they walked in, Coach was standing by the homework room. He gave Jayden a serious look but patted him on the back. “You up for practice at 4:00?” Jayden looked at Asia and then the Coach. “Yes Coach, I’ll be there.”

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What decisions have we seen the characters make?
- Did the characters stay true to their values when making these decisions?
  - Can anyone remember what values are important to the characters?
- How did the characters’ decisions impact their relationships with others?

### NOVELLA CHARACTERS’ VALUES

*In Chapter 1, the following values were listed as important to our characters:*

**Dani:** Family, honesty, and persistence.

**Asia:** Fame, creativity, and authenticity.

**DeQuan:** Acceptance/open-mindedness, loyalty, and self-control.

**Jayden:** Leadership, power, and humor.

## Activity 10F: Snowball Reflection (10 minutes)

### MATERIALS

- Blank paper

- “We know that using STAR can help us make difficult decisions. When we REFLECT, we can see when we’ve made decisions based on our values and when we haven’t. We can see when our decisions have worked out well for us and when they haven’t. And we can better understand how our decisions impact the people around us, including our classmates, friends, and family.”
- “Let’s do some reflection on what we’ve learned throughout the *El Camino: The Road to Healthy Relationships* program, so we can recall some of the skills we’ve learned that will help us in the future.”
- **Make sure all students have a blank piece of paper and something to write with.**
- “I’d like each of you to write down one thing you have learned about decision making or skills that can help you build and maintain healthy relationships.”
- “No one will know what you have written, but in a few minutes, we will read all of the answers out loud, so please do not use any names.”
- **Once everyone has written their reflection,** have students stand up and form a circle. Each student should crumple their paper into a ball and then throw their piece of paper into the middle of the circle. Everyone picks up one ball of paper and throws it again. Everyone picks up one piece of paper and shares what is written on theirs.
- **After students are done sharing their reflections, thank them for their participation and hard work in the activities.**

# Appendix: Student Handouts + Printed Materials

### **Activity 1C: Value and Definition Cards**

Cards may be printed using pre-perforated Avery Template 5390 Name Badge Insert Refills or printed on plain paper and hand cut.

**Acceptance /  
Open-Mindedness**

**Authenticity**

**Creativity**

**Kindness**

**Fame**

**Family**

**Honesty**

**Humor**

**Leadership**

**Loyalty**

**Persistence**

**Power**

**Prosperity / Wealth**

**Self-Control**

**Faith**

Open to new experiences, ideas, and people.  
Non-judgmental.

Being true to yourself.

Thinking of new ways to do things. Using your imagination to create something artistic.

Being friendly and respectful to other people.

Being known or talked about by many people.

Caring about close relationships with your family.

Being fair and truthful.

Being funny or making people laugh.

Encouraging a group to get things done together.

Showing support for your friends, family, and/or the things you believe are important.

Continuing to try even when something is hard.

Being able to influence other people or events.

Having money in your pocket.

Being able to control your impulses, words, and behavior.

Belief in a higher power or inner strength.

Activity 1F: Signs for Vote with Your Feet



**Disagree**



**Agree**



## Activity 1G: Identify Your Values Handout

-  Draw a heart in the boxes of **5 values** that are very important to you.
-  Make a check mark in the boxes of **5 values** that are somewhat important to you.
-  Mark an X in the boxes of **5 values** that are not important to you.

<p><b>Acceptance/Open-Mindedness:</b> Open to new experiences, ideas, and people. Non-judgmental.</p>	<p><b>Authenticity:</b> Being true to yourself.</p>	<p><b>Creativity:</b> Thinking of new ways to do things. Using your imagination to create something artistic.</p>
<p><b>Kindness:</b> Being friendly and respectful to other people.</p>	<p><b>Fame:</b> Being known or talked about by many people.</p>	<p><b>Family:</b> Caring about close relationships with your family.</p>
<p><b>Honesty:</b> Being fair and truthful.</p>	<p><b>Humor:</b> Being funny or making people laugh.</p>	<p><b>Leadership:</b> Encouraging a group to get things done together.</p>
<p><b>Loyalty:</b> Showing support for your friends, family, and/or the things you believe are important.</p>	<p><b>Persistence:</b> Continuing to try even when something is hard.</p>	<p><b>Power:</b> Being able to influence other people or events.</p>
<p><b>Prosperity/Wealth:</b> Having money in your pocket.</p>	<p><b>Self-Control:</b> Being able to control your impulses, words, and behavior.</p>	<p><b>Faith:</b> Belief in a higher power or inner strength.</p>

## Activity 2C: Novella Chapter 1: Back to School at Franklin Middle School

**Dani, Asia, DeQuan, and Jayden** are four students at Franklin Middle School. Dani, Asia, and DeQuan have been friends since 1<sup>st</sup> grade. They always walked home from school and ate lunch together and spent time at Key rec center. Jayden just recently moved to the neighborhood.



Dani

**DANI:** Dani lives with her mother and father and younger sister. Her mother is from the Dominican Republic. Her father is from Washington, DC. Her favorite subjects in school are reading and science. Dani likes to go shopping with friends and do art projects at the rec. She also likes to cook with her mother and sister. Dani often posts pics of herself and her best friends, Asia and DeQuan, and messages them in their group chat. Dani likes school and she feels it is important to be nice to her friends. In the last year, Dani's body has changed a lot. Her mother says she is growing up, but Dani often feels uncomfortable about the way she looks. Dani's values are family, honesty, and persistence.



Asia

**ASIA:** Asia lives with her mother, grandmother, and older sister Kaylie. She likes to spend time with her friend Dani. Sometimes they go shopping or to a movie, but usually they just go to Toni's carry-out. Asia also likes to go out with Kaylie and her friends. Asia's mom works at a grocery store and often works late at night or on weekends. Asia's grandmother stays home with her and Kaylie. Asia helps her grandmother around the house. Asia thinks that middle school will be a lot more fun than elementary school. She wants to join the dance team this year. Asia feels like her mother treats her like a child and she really wants to be more independent. Asia's values are fame, creativity, and authenticity.



DeQuan

**DEQUAN:** DeQuan lives with his mother and step-father. DeQuan's mother is a teacher's assistant and his step-father is a building contractor. He is best friends with Dani and Asia. They have been friends for a long time and DeQuan feels happy and comfortable spending time with them. He likes going to the rec and doing art projects and hanging with them at Toni's carry-out. DeQuan also likes going shopping or out to eat with his mother. DeQuan is a good drum player and he listens to a lot of different kinds of music. This year DeQuan wants to play drums in the school band. It is important to him to work hard practicing his music. DeQuan knows a lot of boys in school are talking about how they feel about girls. However, DeQuan has those feelings for boys. DeQuan's values are acceptance/open-mindedness, loyalty, and self-control.



Jayden

**JAYDEN:** Jayden just moved to the neighborhood. Jayden likes to spend time playing basketball and playing video games. Sometimes he goes out to eat at Toni's carry-out with other guys from the rec basketball team or just hangs outside. He doesn't know many people in the area. Jayden is in foster care. Jayden's mother died from cancer two years ago. He started missing school and was arrested for shoplifting. He spent a couple of weeks in juvenile detention. Now, it is important to Jayden to keep out of trouble and pass all of his classes. He also wants to be on the school basketball team this year. Jayden's values are leadership, power, and humor.

## Activity 2D: Character Values Chart

Character	Values	Evidence
1.  Dani		
2.  Asia		
3.  DeQuan		
4.  Jayden		

**Discussion Question:** Which character are you most likely to be friends with? Why?

## Activity 2G: Novella Chapter 2: First Weekend of the School Year

The first Saturday after school started was a warm and sunny day. Everyone was making plans for the first weekend of the school year.

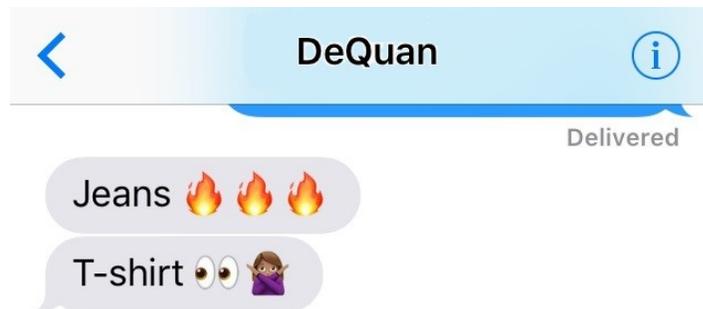


Dani

**DANI:** Dani was home with her family in the morning. She had chores she needed to finish before she could go out. She didn't really mind the chores, but she and DeQuan had made plans to go to Toni's carry-out and see a new movie with her favorite actor. A few hours before the movie, DeQuan texted her:



Dani was anxiously trying to decide what to wear. Her favorite purple shirt didn't really fit her anymore. She put it on anyway with her jeans and took a quick pic to send to DeQuan. DeQuan was always very honest with his comments. He texted:



Dani laughed and changed into her pink tee with the sparkly heart.



Asia

**ASIA:** Asia and her sister Kaylie were going to the mall. Asia had \$15 from a birthday gift from her grandmother. Asia and Kaylie are about the same size, and Kaylie agreed to let Asia borrow a skirt. Asia felt that her own clothes were too childish. When Asia finished getting dressed, she sent a few selfies to her friends. At the mall, Asia tried on a lot of clothes. She posted selfies in different outfits and each one got a lot of "likes," but she decided to spend her money on some make-up instead.



DeQuan

**DEQUAN:** DeQuan woke up early on Saturday and listened to some music. He could smell his mom cooking bacon and sausage for breakfast. He texted Dani to confirm their plans. As usual, she sent him a picture of what she was wearing. The movie was pretty funny. DeQuan and Dani kept texting about how much they both liked the lead actor. He posted about seeing the movie and a few of his cousins in New York ‘liked’ it. Later in the evening, DeQuan practiced his favorite songs on the drums and changed his profile picture to a photo Dani had taken of him sitting at his drum set.



Jayden

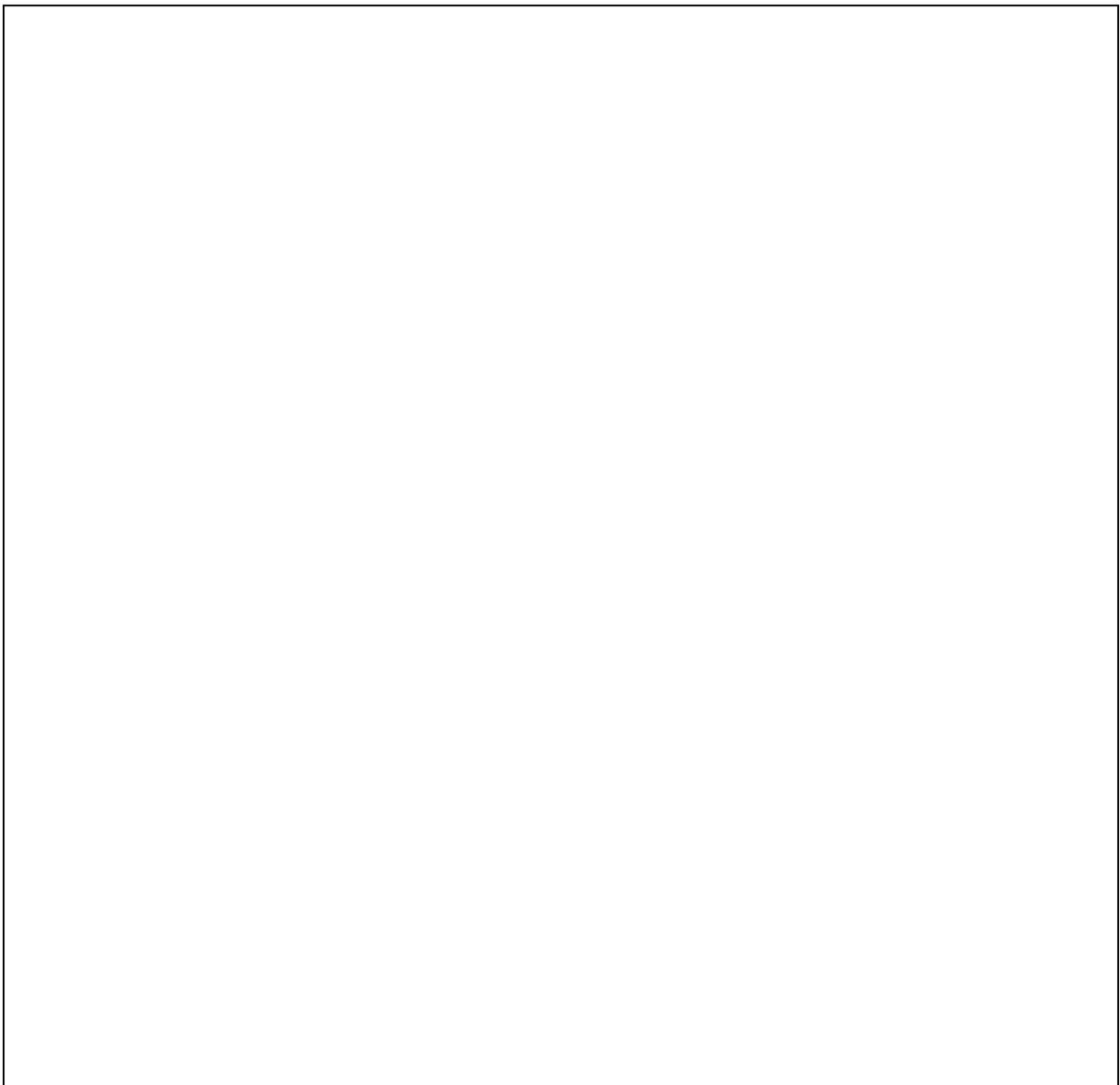
**JAYDEN:** Jayden usually spends his weekends practicing basketball. Key rec is closed on the weekends, but there are a couple of outside courts nearby. Jayden doesn’t know many of the guys who play down there – some of them are high school students. After shooting some free throws, he decided to go down to Toni’s carry-out to buy a sub and fries. As he ate, he scrolled through his newsfeed. He saw one post from a girl in his English class – she was posting a lot of pics of her shopping and trying on different clothes. He ‘liked’ one of her pictures. Jayden also saw posts from his favorite basketball player and found a few funny memes to send to his friends.

## Activity 2H: Identity Profiles #nofilter

Use the box below to create/draw a profile of one of the following social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, or a personal blog.

### Include:

- **Post a photo/video:** what does the picture or video mean to you, and why have you chosen to share it with others?
- **Link to a current event:** what is your opinion about this event, and why have you chosen to share it with others?
- **Song or poetry lyrics:** what meaning do these words have for you, and why have you chosen to share it with others?



### Activity 3G: Novella Chapter 3: Dani's Birthday Part 1



Dani



Asia



DeQuan



Jayden

Dani, Asia, and DeQuan have lunch together every day. However, one day when Dani and DeQuan went into the lunchroom, Asia was already sitting with another girl and Jayden, a

boy from their English class. Dani asked DeQuan, “Should we go over to the table where Asia is sitting?” DeQuan just shrugged his shoulders, “Na, let’s just eat. Asia’s acting mad rude.” Dani felt surprised at what DeQuan said. Dani had noticed that Asia wasn’t texting as much as usual. Dani’s birthday is in a few weeks. Dani planned to invite DeQuan and Asia to her birthday at lunch. But then Asia was sitting at another table and DeQuan just seemed mad about something. During lunch, Dani kept looking over at the table where Asia was eating. They were all talking a lot – and Asia was whispering and laughing. Dani told herself that she should just go over to the table and talk to Asia. But then she felt butterflies in her stomach. DeQuan quickly ate his lunch and left saying, “I’m dipping. See you after school.”

That evening Dani told her mother that she didn’t have time during school to invite Asia and DeQuan to the birthday dinner. Dani’s mother joked with her about wanting to go to dinner at McDonald’s – Dani’s favorite place to eat when she was little. “So mija, which McDonald’s are we going to this time?” Dani usually laughed, but this time she was quiet. Dani’s mother asked her what was wrong – when her mother was serious, she always spoke to Dani in Spanish. Dani told her mother that she just felt tired.

That evening, Dani texted Asia and DeQuan.



After she sent the text, Dani had a lot of feelings – sadness, a little angry, and embarrassed. She thought that she had never felt this way before about Asia.

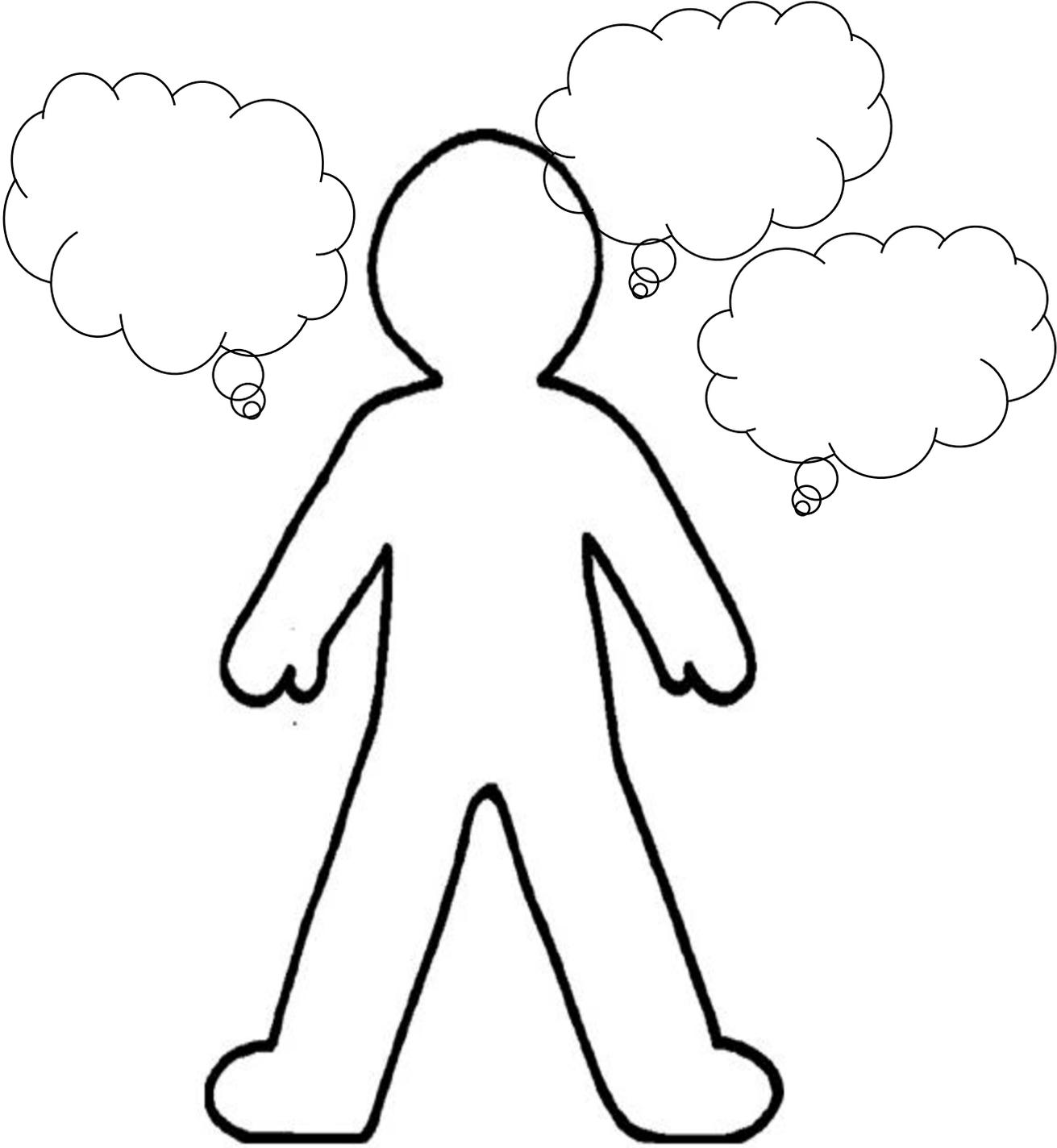
Later that same evening, Dani heard her phone beep. She didn't recognize the number. Dani hesitated but opened the message.



Hey birthday girl I wouldn't eat too much cake cuz you're already too fat! 🙄 🙄 🙄

Dani felt a rush of cold wash over her. Her heart beat faster, and her hands felt clammy. She knows that she only texted two people – DeQuan and Asia. Dani also knows that DeQuan would never call her fat.

**Activity 4C: Stress Responses Handout**



Activity 4C: Signs for Stress Response Activity – Choose 4



**Nauseated /  
sick to stomach**

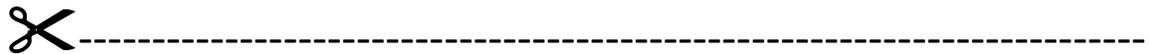


**Like there's a brick in  
stomach**

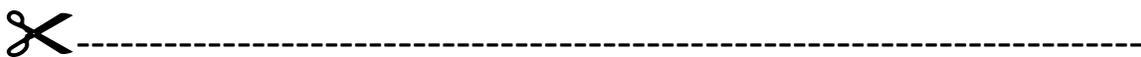




**Tightness in chest**



**Trouble breathing**





**Hot**



**Clenching fists**



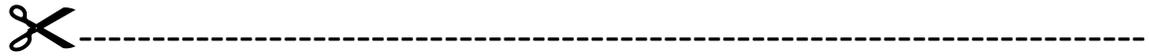


**Sweaty hands**



**Pounding /  
racing heart**

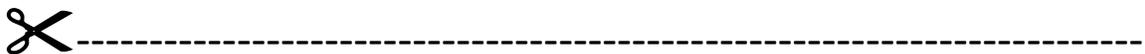




# Shaky legs



# Butterflies in stomach



## Activity 4G: Novella Chapter 4: After School at the Rec



Dani



Asia



DeQuan



Jayden

Dani, Asia, DeQuan, and Jayden go to an after-school program at the rec. Ms. Fisher is the director and she has worked at the rec for many years.

Dani and DeQuan are working on decorating a bulletin board for fall with Ms. Fisher. Dani is concentrating on cutting out paper leaves. DeQuan is putting the leaves on the board, but he is also taping them on Dani's back. Dani does not feel like joking around. She has been trying to avoid Asia since receiving the text about her party.

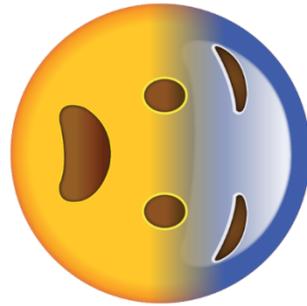
Asia is sitting in the homework room working on math. She hates doing homework and is always looking for an excuse to 'take a break.' Asia knows that phones aren't allowed in the homework room, but she sends a text to DeQuan anyway.



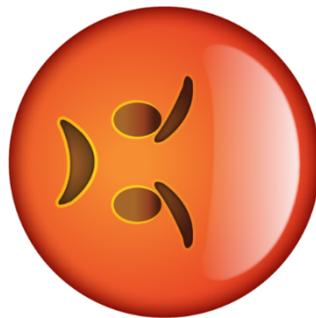
DeQuan walks into the homework room and sits at a table on the other side of the room from Asia. He sees Asia's text but doesn't respond. A few minutes later, Jayden comes over to Asia and starts joking around with her. Some of the things Jayden says are funny, but some make Asia feel uncomfortable. As Jayden gets up to leave for basketball practice, he yells to DeQuan, "Hey shorty – come over here." DeQuan looks at Asia and Jayden and turns his back to them. DeQuan sends a text to Dani.



Activity 5G: How do you Feel?



**Afraid**



**Angry**



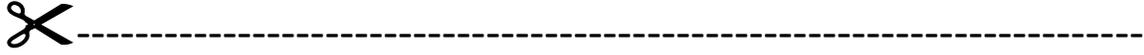


**Confused**



**Excited**

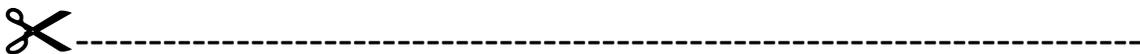




**Disappointed**

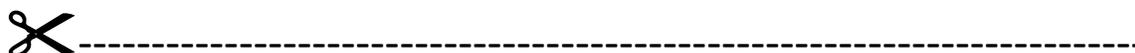


**Embarrassed**





# Another emotion



## Activity 5I: Novella Chapter 5: Dani's Birthday Part 2



Dani

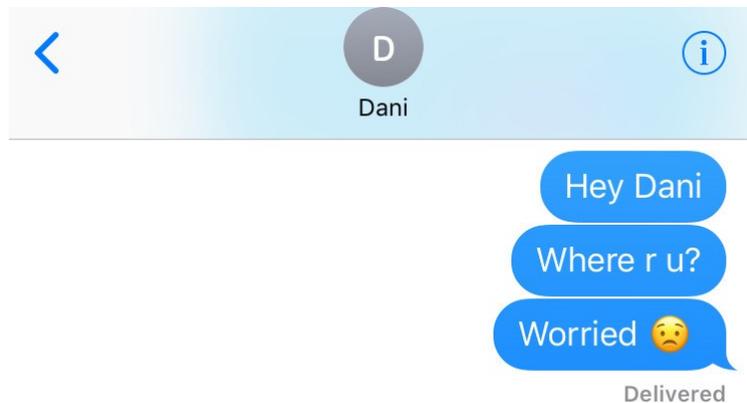
A couple days after getting the strange text, Dani doesn't go to school. She tells her mom that she feels sick. She wants to tell her mom about what happened, but she is afraid her mom will tell her not to use her phone so much. Dani tells herself, "Just don't mess with Asia and her new friends." But then she starts to think about ways to get back at Asia and make her feel bad.

\*\*\*



DeQuan

DeQuan texted Dani and asked why she wasn't at school. He thought she had been kind of quiet at the rec yesterday.



Dani has not replied to DeQuan's messages. DeQuan thinks that he and Dani always share everything. Now she isn't even answering his texts.

\*\*\*



Asia



Jayden

Asia likes spending time with her new friends but sometimes Jayden makes mean jokes about Dani and DeQuan. Those jokes make Asia's stomach flip-flop. A couple days ago, Asia received a birthday invite from Dani. She was with Jayden at the rec. Jayden saw the text on Asia's phone and said, "Hey Asia, send me Dani's number so I can wish her a happy birthday." Jayden sent a picture and a message to Dani. Now today, Dani is not in school.

## Activity 6D: Novella Chapter 6, Part 1: Jayden’s Story



Jayden

Jayden lives with his foster parents. Jayden’s mom died two years ago from cancer. Jayden tells everybody that his father lives in Virginia – but, Jayden isn’t really sure where his father lives. The last he heard about his father, his mother told him that he was “in jail where he belongs.” When Jayden first went into foster care, he stopped going to school and was caught shoplifting. He spent a month in juvenile detention.

He likes his new foster parents. His foster mother, Ms. Renee, always helps him with his homework. Jayden is really good at math, but he has a hard time with reading. Jayden wants to do better in school this year and play on the school basketball team.

One day after school, Jayden got into a fight at the rec with one of the boys on his basketball team. Ms. Renee asked Jayden what happened and listened to his side of the story. Ms. Renee told Jayden he had to learn to control his temper. She said she understood that he still felt very sad about his mother becoming sick and dying. She also said she worried about him – that he would get hurt or would hurt somebody if he gets into fights.

## Activity 6G: Novella Chapter 6, Part 2: DeQuan's Story



DeQuan

DeQuan feels that ever since starting middle school, things have not been the same. He and Asia are not talking at all anymore. And Dani is so busy thinking about what is going on with Asia that she hardly listens to anything DeQuan has to say. In the past, DeQuan and Dani shared everything. DeQuan felt that Dani was the only person he could really share his feelings with – including when he told her that he felt more attracted to boys than girls. DeQuan remembered Dani giving him a hug and saying, “you know I have your back.”

Now DeQuan’s mom and step-father have been fighting a lot. DeQuan’s mom told him that his step-father is moving out. DeQuan does not have a good relationship with his step-father, but he can see his mother is upset. DeQuan hasn’t been going to the rec much lately. After school, he just goes home and plays his drums and listens to music. DeQuan was surprised when Dani suddenly texted him.



## **Activity 6H: Character Cards**

Cards may be printed using pre-perforated Avery Template 5390 Name Badge Insert Refills or printed on plain paper and hand cut.

<p><b>Say:</b> One of my friends has such a great house, with tons of video games and snacks! Money is really tight at my house, so we don't have a TV and definitely don't have snacks. My friend wants to come over, but I am a bit worried. What if they judge me?</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> I used to be best friends with this person, but we got in a huge fight last month. We haven't spoken since then. Today, we got paired up in science class for this very important project! I don't know what to do.</p>
<p><b>Say:</b> I haven't gotten any sleep in the last few days. There's so much in my mind and during class I am so tired! My teacher saw me falling asleep and called me out in front of the whole class! Everyone was laughing. It was so embarrassing!</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> My friends have been starting some drama online with this new kid in my class. Now, there's a date and a time for us to fight. My friends keep asking me if I'm going to show up or chicken out... I'm just so confused.</p>
<p><b>Say:</b> My best friend and I used to do everything together. Ever since this new student started in our school, I haven't seen my friend as much. Yesterday, my friend posted a picture of themselves and the new student with the caption #bestfriend. That hurt my feelings because... that used to be me.</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> I finally told my crush I like them! And guess what? They showed all their friends my text and now some of them are teasing me about it on social media.</p>
<p><b>Say:</b> So, I have a crush on my friend's ex. I asked if it was okay if we hang out and my friend said yeah. Her ex kissed me last night at the basketball game and I think someone told my friend because now there's some rumors about me going around.</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> This kid in my class is having a pool party, and everyone is invited. But I don't know how to swim! It's going to be so embarrassing... I don't think I should go.</p>

<p><b>Say:</b> I can't believe what happened to me. I injured myself badly during the first basketball game of the season and now I can't play the rest of the season. I am the star player! What am I supposed to do with myself?</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> I practiced my routine for months! Yesterday while I was performing, I tripped and fell in front of everyone. I was embarrassed then, but I am even more embarrassed today because someone in the crowd recorded it and shared the video online. I feel like everyone is making fun of me!</p>
<p><b>Say:</b> Before I come to school, I have to take my little brother to kindergarten. My bus has been late the past 3 days! My teacher told me if I am late again, she's going to drop my grade. That's just not fair!</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> Some other kids and I went to the national math competition to represent our school. We were on the last round against another school and whoever got it right would win. I really thought I had it when they called on me, but I didn't... I got the question wrong and my school lost! The team is probably so mad at me.</p>

## Activity 7C: Novella Chapter 7: Scenes

### JAYDEN AFTER PRACTICE



Jayden

**SCENE 1.** One afternoon after basketball practice, Jayden went to Toni’s carry-out with some of the other players. Stephen is a couple years older than Jayden. Over the summer, Stephen helped Jayden improve his basketball skills. Stephen is a good friend of Jayden’s brother and Jayden likes hanging out with them. At the store, Stephen walks over to Jayden and sticks a bag of candy into Jayden’s coat pocket.

**Stephen:** C’mon help me out. I don’t have any money today.

**Jayden:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Stephen:** Just this once man.

**Jayden:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### DEQUAN AND DANI



DeQuan



Dani

**SCENE 2.** Dani found out Jayden sent her the mean text about her birthday. DeQuan told her that Jayden has also been saying and texting nasty things about him. DeQuan said Jayden needs to learn a lesson. He suggested posting something mean online about him.

**DeQuan:** I’m tired of those two getting on me.

**Dani:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DeQuan:** The only way they will stop is if we do something.

**Dani:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 7F: Role Play Activity Handout

### ROLE PLAY 1

Aliyah and Hannah have been arguing with their friend Diamond for the last few days. Hannah thinks that she and Aliyah should get back at Diamond by pranking her, but Aliyah thinks it would be too mean.

What does Aliyah say to Hannah? How does Hannah respond?

### ROLE PLAY 2

Jonah has had a crush on his friend Brianna for a long time, and he finally decides to tell her how he feels. Brianna doesn't feel the same way, but she still wants to keep her friendship with Jonah.

What does Brianna say to Jonah? How does Jonah respond?

### ROLE PLAY 3

Elijah is supposed to be home by 5pm for a family dinner. He has spent all afternoon playing soccer with his friends at the park. He knows he has to go home, but his friends are trying to get him to stay.

What does Elijah tell his teammates? How do they respond?

### ROLE PLAY 4

Zion and Kennedy are friends. Kennedy accidentally shared one of Zion's secrets online. Now there's a rumor about Zion going around the school.

What does Zion say to Kennedy? How does Kennedy respond?

## Activity 8C: Novella Chapter 8: Jayden and Asia



Jayden



Asia

Yesterday while Jayden was doing his homework at the rec, Ms. Fisher caught him on his phone in the homework room. She took his phone away and saw a post Jayden had just written, making fun of DeQuan. Now today, when Jayden arrived for basketball practice, he saw Ms. Fisher talking to Coach. At the end of the practice, Jayden was getting ready to leave when Coach asked to talk with him.

“Jayden, Ms. Fisher told me about what you shared online yesterday. I am afraid that I am going to have to suspend you from the team for the next week. If anyone else on the team is posting these kinds of things and I find out, they are also going to be suspended.”

The next day Jayden saw Asia at the store. She waved at him and said, “Hey Jayden, what are you doing here? No basketball today?”

“I’m tired of the rec. I don’t think I’m going to play ball there anymore. Ms. Fisher and Coach are too much into everybody’s business.”

Asia looked surprised. “What happened?”

“I was just posting some stuff and they are both on my back.”

Asia looked at Jayden in the eyes. “I think some of your posts are funny. But sometimes you take things too far and make me uncomfortable. I know you have said things that have hurt Dani and DeQuan.”

Jayden looked away. “What are you talking about? You’re always laughing at them.” Asia stood up straight and looked at Jayden. “I know, but I shouldn’t have done that. I like hanging out with you, but if you keep posting those kinds of things, I don’t think we can hang out together.”

Jayden looked surprised and then angry. “What is with you, girl? So, don’t hang with me. See if I care. Go back to your little friends.”

Asia continued to walk out of the store with Jayden. “I would miss hanging out with you. I do think you’re funny, but I just can’t be friends with someone who makes fun of people I care about. But it’s your decision what to do.” Jayden said something rude about Asia in a loud voice as he walked away.

Asia had a lot of mixed feelings. But she was sure she had said and done the right thing.

## Activity 9G: Novella Chapter 9: Jayden



Jayden

On the weekends, Jayden likes to play NBA 2K. Some of the people he plays with are his school friends. Some are just people he knows online. While they play, they talk and joke around a lot with each other on Discord. One of Jayden’s school friends asks him about the picture he sent to ‘fat Dani’. The friend is laughing and suggests that Jayden post another picture. He says he will send Jayden a picture. When Jayden gets the picture on his phone, he is surprised and embarrassed. He would never post such a picture.

“So, what do you think? Pretty funny, huh?”

Jayden isn’t sure what to say. “I like to post pictures, but this is not funny.”

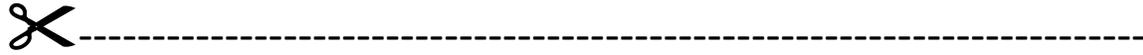
“What’s the big deal? You are always laughing and telling jokes about Dani and her friend DeQuan. I’ll post it if you don’t.”

Jayden likes playing video games with these friends. But he does not feel comfortable now. He thinks about what Asia told him a few days ago, about taking things too far. “No, don’t post that picture. If you do, I just can’t hang with you.”

Jayden’s friend laughed. “Why are you being so weird? You’re making such a big deal. Whatever, man.”

Jayden was quiet and stopped playing the game. He could still hear everyone enjoying the game and talking. Jayden has a lot of mixed feelings, but he thinks he has said the right thing. Jayden turns off his computer.

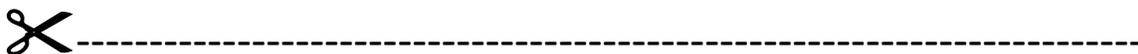
Activity 10B: Signs for Vote with Your Feet



**Disagree**



**Agree**



## Activity 10F: Novella Chapter 10: New and Old Friends



Dani



DeQuan

**DEQUAN AND DANI:** All through elementary school, Dani, Asia, and DeQuan were best friends. DeQuan hasn't really made any new friends in middle school and now Asia and Dani spend less time with him.

Asia spends a lot of time with Jayden and his friends. Sometimes she ignores DeQuan and even laughs when Jayden makes rude jokes about him. It seems like some of the kids in middle school say nasty things just to start a fight. Dani has also met a few new friends. She always waves at DeQuan, but rarely stops to talk to him in school.

One day, Dani was waiting at the bus stop. Dani saw DeQuan walking quickly toward her. She could see a couple of boys from the rec behind DeQuan. They were saying something about DeQuan. Dani thought DeQuan looked like he was about to cry. Dani felt sad and angry. As soon as DeQuan came close to the bus stop, Dani walked over to him, grabbed his arm, and said, "Don't listen to them. Let's grab a couple slices of pizza and go back to my house. I've missed spending time with you."



Asia



Jayden

**ASIA AND JAYDEN:** Asia liked having lunch and going to Toni's carry-out after school with Jayden. She felt like she was growing up, and Jayden made her laugh. However, the other day she was with Jayden and he told her about how Ms. Fisher and Coach were getting on him about his posts. Then Jayden got mad at her and said something nasty about her.

A few days later, Asia saw Jayden hanging out after school in front of the rec. As usual, he was looking down at his phone and didn't see her walking by.

Asia felt hesitant to say anything but stopped anyway. "Hey Jayden. Watcha doing?" Jayden looked up. Asia thought he might say something rude or make a joke. Instead, he looked unhappy and just shook his head.

Asia continued talking. "Let's go inside. We can get started on that English project that's due on Friday."

"I don't want to see Ms. Fisher and Coach. They're just gonna give me a hard time." Asia looked directly at Jayden. "That's not true. I know them both. Come on. What's the basketball team going to do without you there?"

Jayden shrugged his shoulders and stuck his phone in his pocket. "Okay. I'll give it a try." As they walked in, Coach was standing by the homework room. He gave Jayden a serious look but patted him on the back. "You up for practice at 4:00?" Jayden looked at Asia and then the Coach. "Yes Coach, I'll be there."