

Caring

In the first week of this unit, we will dive deeper into the concept of caring. Specifically, this unit explores what it means to care for and show concern for both ourselves and those around us. The next four weeks will focus on caring, gratitude, empathy, and compassion. However, in order for us to be truly caring towards others, we must first look inward at how we treat ourselves. We must respect and care for ourselves before we can genuinely care for others.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



Toss in Self-Care

Using a beach ball, the class will engage in a conversation around self-care and how we need to pay attention to both physical and mental caring of ourselves. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Self-Care Top 5

Divide the class into groups of 4-6. Assign half of the groups to create a top 5 list of the most important aspects of physical self-care. The other half will create a top 5 list connected to mental self-care. Allow time for whole class sharing.

For Partners
15 minutes



My Priorities

With a partner, identify your most important physical and mental way of caring for yourself. How do you take care of YOU? Share with each other. If time allows, allow whole class sharing.

For Individuals
15 minutes



My Daily Routine

How do you care for you EACH DAY? Using the handout provided below, have each student create a daily routine that shows what their daily self-care looks like. Emphasize the importance of both physical and mental self-care.

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Media Self-Care

Divide the class up into groups of 4-6. Have each group research apps that help users track screen time and set goals based on desired self-care parameters. Allow time for each group to share their preferred app and explain how it helps to care for our mental health.

Toss In Self-Care

This is the first week of our Caring unit. Students will focus on self-care and explore the concepts of both physical and mental self-care.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- Inflatable Beach Ball
- Sharpie Marker

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Explore how they currently demonstrate self-care in both physical and mental ways.
- Create a personal goal for increasing self-care as a part of their daily routine.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the Caring Unit! In this unit we will talk about a number of concepts related to caring: compassion, empathy, and gratitude. Let's begin this unit like we did the Respect unit and look at how we care for ourselves. What does self-care look like for you? Exercise? Planning ahead so you are less stressed? Meditation? Prayer? Time with family and friends? Reading for fun? What does it look like at school? Eating a healthy lunch? Walking with students during a free period? (Does your school have a walking program? If not and this fuels your self-care, maybe you could start one!) Like respect, if students don't see us modeling self-care, they won't do it themselves. So, think about how you can model self-care at school and then set an intention to actually do it. Communicate this intention with students so they know that you are engaging in the practice of self-care just like you will be asking them to engage in self-care.



Share

3-5 minutes

Take some time to think about different ways to show self-care towards yourself. What does self-care look like to you?

(Invite student responses.)

Excellent! Self-care includes the way we take care of ourselves both physically and mentally. Kind words AND actions are both needed to truly be caring towards yourself.



Inspire

3-5 minutes

We talk a lot about how to care for ourselves physically, such as eating right, getting enough sleep, and practicing good hygiene. However, our thoughts and words that we say to ourselves is also a very important part of self-care. You may not be aware of the thoughts you have throughout the day, but they directly affect your mood, how you handle things, and even how well you are able to complete school work, sports, and other activities.

Let's go over some possible options for kind words that demonstrate how you care for yourself. This can be tricky, so I'll start with an example. When I get ready in the morning, I tell myself, "You are smart and can do anything you put your mind to!"

What are some kind words you could think or say to yourself?



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now play a game to explore different ways that each of us currently practice self-care. Show the beach ball to the class and explain that each section of the beach ball has a question written on it. If desired, read aloud each question so that the class can begin to mentally prepare some answers during the actual game.

Questions:

- How do you show self-care in your appearance?
- How do you show self-care with your words?
- What is one way you take care of yourself each morning or night?
- What is one way you can make yourself feel better when it's been a rough day?
- How can you take care of yourself when you feel overwhelmed?
- How can you take care of yourself even when things are going really well in your life?

Note: A standard inflatable beach ball has 6 sections. If your ball has more, feel free to repeat the questions or add your own.

How to play:

Have the class form a circle in the room by sitting on top of their desks or on the floor depending on your set up. Starting with the teacher, each person will read the question on which their right thumb is touching.

After answering the question, the person will then throw the beach ball to another and have a seat. Repeat until all class members have had a chance to answer at least one question.

Note: If desired, you can allow a student to choose a different question on the beach ball if they feel uncomfortable with the question they received.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

As a class, discuss why self-care can be so difficult at times. Examples: We get busy and forget ourselves, we don't make time to properly care for ourselves physically *and* mentally, we don't see the value, etc.

This week, make a commitment to spend 5 extra minutes everyday on *you*. You are a valuable member of our class, your family, and our community. Take time for you and report back to us on how it felt to consciously carve out time.

