

## Questions to consider when choosing activities/strategies:

- How does this activity center and elevate youth voice?
- How is this activity culturally responsive and inclusive?
- How will my youth receive this activity? What modifications would I make?
- What is my comfort level with this activity?
- What would be the greatest challenge for me in integrating this activity? How could I overcome that challenge? (Who or what could help)
- What is my objective in using this activity? What is the why?

Note: When incorporating these activities into the classroom, it's important that you actively engage in the activity as a fellow participant.

## Community Agreements or "Our Time Together Agreements"

Facilitate a discussion based on the following questions- let youth know you don't have expectations and want them to be honest, not say what they think you want to hear. This can be done in silent reflection, pairs, or small groups, before discussing as a whole group. This can also be powerful for one-on-one situations.

- What do you need from our community to be your best?
- How can our community support your learning?
- How do you want to be treated?
- How do you think others want to be treated?
- How should we work together to solve conflicts?
- How can we create a brave and inclusive space?

Responses are posted on a large sheet of chart paper. This can also be done virtually on a shared visible document. As an idea is repeated, a checkmark or star is placed beside it.

With each suggestion, ask for clarification on what the suggestion 'looks like, sounds like, feels like'. This activity may take place over several days. Each day the agreements are refined.

Youth decide if there are items that need to be added, deleted, or combined. Youth can also take home their lists, review them, and think about additional ways in which the agreements might be fine-tuned.

Once finished, each person signs the contract as a commitment to follow the contract while together.

Display the agreements in a visible location and refer to often. Revisit regularly (monthly or as needed) to make changes and modifications to best meet the needs of the group.

NYSED CR-S Framework Connection: Welcoming and affirming environment  
SEL Competency: Self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills

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## Signature Social-Emotional Learning Practices

**Welcoming Inclusion Activities:** Brief, interactive experiences that bring the voice of every participant into the room, making a connection to one another and/or to the work ahead, with each perspective-laden, culturally-rich voice being heard, respected and learned from.

1. Checking In: Youth can identify a number, color, weather forecast, song, genre of music, emoji/meme, animal, shape, location etc. describing how they are feeling today or at the moment.
2. Youth may choose whether or not to share why. This can be done in pairs, groups or independently.
3. Identifying a number can be a safe way to identify those “hard to explain” emotions, practice self-awareness and foster relationships.

**Engaging strategies:** Inherently infused with SEL, vary in complexity, includes reflection and processing time, and consists of sequential steps that are facilitated to support learning individually (like the use of “turn-to-your-partner”) and collectively (for example, “Socratic Seminar” and “Jigsaw”).

1. Number (or color) popsicle sticks or Ping-Pong balls, doubles (or more) of each. Place in jar or fishbowl in a centralized area of the classroom. Prompt Youth to select a number at the start of the activity.
2. Present a question, quote, topic, image or content connection for youth reflection.
3. Prompt youth to connect with a classmate(s) with a corresponding number.
4. Youth will share their reflection with a peer and regroup for whole class discussion.
5. Voice & Choice Modification: Youth develop and submit the questions, themes, prompts for the activity. They may have the option to sign up to lead the activity.

**Optimistic Closure:** Closures may be reflective about the learning, help identify next steps, or make connections to one’s own work. These experiences bring a moment of pause, of collection, of reflection, to help anchor learning and build anticipation for the efforts to come. What’s important is that each engagement, class period, or school day ends in a thoughtfully planned and meaningful way, helping everyone leave with appreciation and energy, looking forward to connecting again.

- Ask youth what worked today and what didn’t work?
- Three W’s: Youth discuss or write:
  1. What did you learn today?
  2. Why does it matter? (How is it relevant? Important? Useful?)
  3. Now What? How can you apply what you learned? How does it connect to other things we have learned /are learning?

[SEL-3-Signature-Practices-Playbook-10.21.19.pdf \(casel.org\)](#)

*NYSED CR-S Framework Connection: Welcoming and affirming environment*

*SEL Competency: Self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making, self-management*