Socio-Emotional Exercises for the Classroom

Web of Kindness – The RADIENT exercise

Required:

- Ball of Yarn or string
- Open area to sit in a circle

Execution and Action:

- The recipient holds a piece of the string and tosses the ball to the next person.
- Pass a ball of yarn across the circle to someone else while stating a positive trait or "word in the web" about them (i.e., "I am passing this to Meg because she is humble and kind").
- You may add the person receiving the compliment accepts this out loud (i.e., I thank Jamal for seeing I am humble and kind). This helps us accept the good in ourselves as well as external validation.
- Start, if possible, by doing the external circle of the web, then criss-cross once the structure is established. Make the goal keeping Charlotte/the class safe with a sturdy web,

Concept:

- Mirroring Charlotte's encouragement of the words she wrote in the web that helped Wilbur.
- Build self-esteem and empower classmates to see positive traits in each other.
- Reframe negative "stinky thinking" while developing resiliency.
- Take down walls created by bullying.
- Show the interconnectivity of positive comments to strengthen group connection.
- Help show that diversity of strengths and talents make us stronger as a whole.

In Conclusion:

By the end, a physical "friendship web" connects everyone, visually demonstrating how individual traits support the entire community.

To Every Season - The Collaborative Generational Timeline

Concept:

- Explore how life changes seasons, aging, and life cycles affect us differently at various ages.
- Create opportunities for resiliency in thinking by reframing crisis.

The Concept and Execution:

- Pair students with an older adult, (i.e., parent, guardian, mentor)
- Have them interview each other starting by asking the prompt, "What was a big life transition you faced?"

        - At my age?
        - One that surprised you?
        - What comforted you?
        - How did you grow through it?
        - What makes you happy looking back?
        - How does this surprise you?
        - What do you wish someone would have taken the time to tell you then?
    - Have older participants ask about events in the students' lives that are the reverse of these questions and honor their place in the life cycle.
        - What activities do you love to do?
        - What do you like to do now that you didn't think you would ever like?
        - How have your friends and family grown and changed?
        - How have you grown and changed through these changes?
        - How have you become a better friend or helper through these events?
    - Ask both mentor and mentee:
        - How do these positive coping mechanisms help each of us as individuals?
        - How do they help us in a family, our classroom, or our community?
    - For the classroom, have tree leaf cutouts. Have participants do one of the following activities on a leaf:
        - Write down a healthy resiliency/coping mechanism that the student wants to develop that their Mentor has.
        - Have the Mentor write down a resiliency/healthy coping mechanism they admire in the student.
        - Pin the leaves in a collaborative "Tree of Seasons" display to show shared resilience across generations.

Perception Filters – Templeton's Defense and Perspective Shifts

The Concept and Execution:

- To build empathy and understanding in relationships when dealing with difficult personalities. Understand the complex boundaries needed while staying emotionally aware in "big emotion" territory.

Start by:

- Dividing the group into small teams.
- Assign them to pitch a defense for Templeton the rat
- From a survivalist perspective, ask why Templeton, even if selfish, was vital to the success of the farm community?

The Takeaway:

- This exercise allows space from reactionary behavior to hostile or toxic personalities, while allowing the student to reframe Templeton (and other potentially unpleasant interactions) from a place of compassion…. And not be reactionary.

- This also allows students to value people who see “differently”, who express boundaries, motivations, or social styles different than their own.

Feelings Wheel insight:

- Look at Templeton under the “mask of anger”, and ask what he is most afraid of. Does he feel appreciated or secure? What starts to change that? When does he finally feel secure?
- How do people respond to Templeton when he is having big emotions?
- Wilbur and Charlotte are unlikely friends. How do they help each other with the different gifts and strengths? (Charlotte saves Wilbur’s life. Wilbur saves her egg sack)

Charlotte’s Web: Intergenerational Discussion Questions for Social-Emotional Wellness

Charlotte’s Web is a timeless story about connection, transitions, and what it means to care for one another. These questions are designed to bridge generational gaps, encouraging children, parents, and grandparents to share personal stories and emotional insights.

Themes of Connection & Belonging

Fern and Charlotte both accept Wilbur exactly as he is

- **When have you felt completely accepted by someone?**
- **What did they do to make you feel that way?**

Charlotte tells Wilbur, "You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing."

- **How do you define a true friend?**
- **Does the definition change as we get older?**

Early in the book, Wilbur feels isolated in the Zuckerman barn.

- **When have you felt lonely?**
- **Do you need to be alone to feel lonely?**
- **What are some healthy ways you handle feelings of loneliness?**
- **How can we help others who might feel left out?**
- **Do we connect more with people with our strengths or with our weaknesses? Why?**

When Wilbur first arrives at the barn, he cries because he feels friendless. Loneliness is something every single human feels at some point, no matter how old they are.

- **What does loneliness feel like to you?**
- **What is a small comfort that helps you get through it?**

Managing Transitions & Grief

The changing of the seasons plays a massive role in the story.

- **What is a major change you've experienced in your life, and how did you adapt to it?**

Charlotte's death is a profound moment, but her legacy lives on through her children and Wilbur's memories.

- **How do we keep the memory of loved ones alive?**
- **When have sharing a story helped you through sadness and grief?**

Charlotte accepts her life cycle with grace.

- **How do you find peace or comfort when facing a situation that you cannot change?**
- **Think... What helped you through losing something special to you?**

Purpose, Self-Worth, & Identity

Charlotte labels Wilbur as "Some Pig," "Terrific," "Radiant," and "Humble."

- **If a friend were to spin a web describing your best qualities, what words would you want them to write?**
- **If you could imagine a new pal, what words written in a web would you want to describe the qualities you would want in them?**

Wilbur doesn't always believe he matches Charlotte's high praise.

- **How do you handle your own inner critic when you don't feel "terrific" or "radiant"?**
- **How do you allow yourself, or your friends, to focus on "progress, not perfection"?**

Charlotte is a small creature, yet she saves a life.

- **What is a "small" act of kindness you've witnessed or done that ended up making a huge difference?**
- **How do you feel when someone thanks you?**

Empathy & Perspective-Taking

Templeton the rat is often selfish, but the other animals still find a way to live alongside him and utilize his strengths.

- **How do you practice patience with people who are difficult to get along with?**
- **When was a time that you remember being grateful people were being patient with you?**

Fern speaks up for Wilbur at the very beginning because he is vulnerable.

- **When is a time you stood up for someone else, or when did someone stand up for you?**
- **How did you feel differently afterwards?**

Heart-to-Heart – Connection & Belonging

These questions invite us to look at the people who make us feel safe, and how we can be that safe space for others.

The Zuckerman barn is filled with different animals, sounds, and smells, but eventually, it becomes a true home for Wilbur.

- **Where is a place—or who is a person—that makes you feel completely safe to be yourself?**

Charlotte sees something special in Wilbur long before he sees it in himself.

- **Has anyone ever believed in you when you were struggling to believe in yourself?**
- **What did that feel like?**

Gentle Steps: Navigating Transitions & Loss

Change can be scary, but sharing our stories helps us see we never have to face life's changing seasons alone.

The book beautifully shows the cycle of seasons—the excitement of summer, the harvest of autumn, and the quiet of winter.

- **What is a big change or "new season" you've had to navigate in your life?**
- **What helped you adjust?**
- **What can help you feel okay even when you are struggling?**
- **Who do you feel safest with?**
- **Does it ever help to write or draw about changes when words may not be easy to speak?**

At the end of the story, Charlotte is gone, but Wilbur loves her children and grandchildren fiercely because of his memory of her.

- **How do you keep the love and lessons of people you've lost alive in your everyday life?**
- **Does your family find ways to celebrate happy memories?**

Charlotte doesn't fight the end of her life; she accepts it as part of nature.

- **When something happens that we cannot fix or change, where do you find the strength to accept it and keep moving forward?**
- **Who do you turn to help you through tough times?**

Finding Your Shine: Identity & Self-Worth

It's easy to feel small in a big world. We explore that our worth is inherent, not earned.

Charlotte weaves incredible words like Terrific and Radiant into her web to save Wilbur.

- **If you could pick one word that you hope people see when they look at your heart, what would it be?**

Wilbur often feels humble and worries he isn't actually "terrific" enough to match Charlotte's praise.

- **Do you ever experience that inner voice telling you you're not enough?**
- **How can we gently talk back to that critical voice?**

Charlotte is a tiny spider, often ignored or disliked by the humans, yet her quiet, clever actions change the world.

- **What is a "quiet" or unseen way you like to show care for the world around you?**
- **Have you ever done a “random act of kindness” that makes people happy, but they did not know that you were the one who gave them the gift?**
- **How did it make you feel when you saw their reaction?**

Grace and Space: Empathy & Understanding

Real communities and families aren't perfect. These questions help us practice patience with others and ourselves.

Making Room for the Templetons: Templeton the rat is grumpy, self-centered, and only helps when there's something in it for him. Yet, the barn community accepts him as he is.

- **How do you practice patience with people in your life who are difficult to love or have different motivations than you?**

Fern steps in front of an axe to save a little pig because it’s the right thing to do.

- **When has someone stood up for you when you felt powerless?**
- **How can we look out for the vulnerable people in our own neighborhoods and schools?**

These questions are part of the © *Pfluger Empathy Movement Method* and were created by Felicia Pfluger ~ *Inspiring artistic excellence and emotional depth in every performer*