



# OUR BEST SELVES

Lessons on Social-Emotional Learning With ELA

## CREATING A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

**GOAL:** Students will identify ways to support others and to reflect on how others have supported them.

**TIME:** One 40-minute class period

**MATERIALS:** Community Activity Sheet, whiteboard or chart paper, family take-home sheet

### LESSON STEPS:

1. Start with a story about a time when you faced a difficult situation and someone showed you support.
2. Have students tell a partner about a time when someone supported them when they were having some strong emotions.
3. As a class, brainstorm a list of strategies for supporting others (including reinforcing those from Lesson 4):
  - Make sure to discuss guidelines for a respectful conversation.
  - Provide specific questions to help guide the conversation.
4. Zero in on the strategy of reaching out to someone you trust to talk to when you experience a challenging emotion. Invite students to take a moment to brainstorm a list of trusted people in their lives. Explain that these people help form their *support system*.
5. Distribute the **Community Activity Sheet**. Give students time to read the two scenes and respond to the questions.
6. Invite students to share their responses and discuss as a class. Are there any patterns they notice? Would some strategies work better than others?
7. Give students an opportunity to think about the specific support they have received in their own lives by writing a letter of gratitude to someone who has supported them, following the instructions on the **Community Activity Sheet**. Before writing, it may be helpful for students to brainstorm in pairs using the prompts on the worksheet.
  - **Thanksgiving Tie-In:** If you teach this lesson near Thanksgiving, connect this activity to the holiday.
8. Encourage students to mail their letters or present them in person.
9. Extend the learning by sending home the family take-home sheet with each student.



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SEL SKILLS ARE THE  
**FOUNDATION  
TO SUCCESS IN  
SCHOOL, CAREER  
AND LIFE.\***

\*Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), casel.org

MY NAME

MY MOOD TODAY (CIRCLE)



## CREATING A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT



**We all need support.** You can help build a community of support wherever you are by recognizing the feelings of others and practicing empathy.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following scenes, and try to see the situation through each character's eyes. Answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.

### Support Scene 1:

Gavin is a student in your class. You invite him to play basketball with you at recess, but he says no. At lunch, you see him sitting on his own, just picking at his food. You know that his younger sister has been in the hospital recently and wonder if that is the reason he is so quiet today.



1. What might Gavin be feeling?
2. How could you help Gavin deal with his feelings?
3. What could you do or say to show support?

**Support Scene 2:** Bettina is a student in your class. When she got to school today, she seemed quieter than usual. She forgot her homework and had to miss morning recess to make it up. Later, during science time, she accidentally knocked over the tray of sand her group was using. Her group members complained loudly, and she had to clean up the mess. When you asked her a question on your way to lunch, she responded angrily and stomped away.

4. What might Bettina be feeling?
5. How could you help Bettina deal with her feelings?
6. What could you do or say to show support?

### Thanks for the Support!

Now, think about a person in your life who has helped and supported you. On a separate sheet of paper, write a letter to express your gratitude (thankfulness) to this person. Make sure to include the following:

- What did this person do?
- How did they make you feel?
- How have they changed your life for the better?



After you write your letter, you can deliver it to the person who supported you.


**FAMILY  
TAKE-HOME**

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## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING AT HOME

In school, we've been learning about social-emotional skills and how to be our best selves. Use the activities on this sheet as an opportunity to sit down as a family and speak openly about how we can support ourselves and others.



### Mix-and-Match Emotions

Do your family members “read” situations the same way? As a family, take a look at the following situations on the following cards. Discuss which emotion each family member thinks would best match. Does everyone agree? Why do you think people might see the same situation differently?

**BONUS:**  
Draw an  
emoji for each  
emotion

#### SITUATIONS

Your family is running late for a doctor's appointment. Once you arrive at the doctor's office, you spend 45 minutes sitting in the waiting room.

Your family has decided to go on a vacation to another state for two whole weeks. You will get to do lots of outdoor activities like camping and hiking while you are there.

You usually spend a lot of time with your close friend, but recently he or she has not been returning your calls. Your birthday is coming up, but you're not sure if he or she remembers.

#### EMOTIONS

**disappointed**
**bored**
**content**
**worried**
**irritated**
**thrilled**

### Keep the Conversation Going!

Conversations at home can be a great way to help children build their social-emotional understanding. Try these conversation starters with your child and other family members:

#### Managing Emotions

- It looks like you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_ right now.
- I understand why that would be \_\_\_\_\_  
(frustrating, exciting, disappointing)
- Have you tried...
  - Taking some deep breaths?
  - Writing down how you feel?
  - Exercising?

#### Providing Support and Empathy

- How do you think he or she is feeling right now?
- Can you remember a time when you felt that way?
- What helps you when you are feeling that way?
- What do you think we should do to help?