

Social and Emotional Learning in the Time of Distance Learning: An Online Resource for Educators Concerned About Children's Coping Skills

(Narration appears in italics throughout this lesson.)

Lesson # 7

Bucket-Filling Techniques

Always begin your class meeting with a Check-In.

A check in is a very important part of each session/lesson/meeting. "Checking in" with each other involves naming and acknowledging feelings, and is a great way to connect members of the group with each other, creating a sense of community. Checking In allows students to pause at the beginning of a session and, by naming their feelings, free up their thinking power for engagement in the session. Research has suggested that the check-in activity builds empathy among group members and strengthens group connections. Students are permitted to pass. If time is a problem, hand signals can be used by students to participate in the check in (thumb up, thumb horizontal, or thumb down).

Today's Check-In: Ask students to describe a time when they felt honored by a compliment, a job well-done that was recognized, an accomplishment, or an every-day interaction. Tell students that they do not have to name people when describing this feeling, but should use one or two sentences to describe the time that they felt honored.

You can start the check-in by modeling a story of your own. My story would be that I was very honored when I received an email from a former student telling me of their success in college and thanking me specifically for the skills they had learned in my class. I was surprised to receive the email and read it several times with a broad smile on my face each time!!

Mini-lesson: Bucket Filling Techniques

Explain to the students that it is sometimes helpful to think that every person carries a bucket that can be either filled or emptied. Using this metaphor, an empty bucket indicates that the person is feeling sad, lonely, afraid, not capable, or unsure; while a full bucket indicates the person is feeling cared about, valued, that he or she belongs, competent, and a general sense of well-being.

In a previous lesson, we learned about the power of different kinds of words. Ask the students if they think that Victim words fill or empty a person's bucket? Dictator words? Ally words? (Review each of the types of words and have the students either say out loud or write in their journals examples of each type of word. Share examples with the class.)

Explain to the students that when we use words or actions that can hurt another person, we dip into or empty their bucket. But....also make clear to students that dipping into or emptying another person's bucket results in our own buckets being emptied too. The opposite is also true. When we say or do something that fills another person's bucket, we fill our own bucket too!! Scientists tell us that a good day contains 5 examples of our buckets being filled and only 2 examples of our bucket being emptied. Ask students how we can help others have 5 examples of bucket filling today.

In the book "How Full Is Your Bucket" by Tom Rath and Dr. Donald Clifton, there is a story about a high school coach who had faith in a young player and helped improve the student's game with kindness and support, even when the player doubted himself and his abilities. That young man went on to become a very famous quarterback in the NFL and always honored that coach for the skills and the confidence he had instilled in the young man.

Activity: Ask students to take out their journals and to think for a minute about someone who has influenced their life positively. Ask students to list two or three things that mentor did that helped increase their skills or confidence. Discuss several of these situations with students.

Watch the following video with the students. Tell students that this video from the movie, Inside Out, is funny and it is OK to laugh.

<https://youtu.be/dOkyKyVFnSs>

Journal Activity:

Ask students to draw a picture and describe a time when they felt the following emotions. When they are finished, have several students share their stories about each emotion.

1. Happy
2. Sad
3. Angry
4. Disgust

5. Scared

Next Lesson: The Power to Choose!!