

**OBJECTIVE**

Students will have the opportunity to connect with the people in the closet relationships with them and grow the skills to build and maintain healthy and supportive relationships.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

Video and Lesson Guide  
Connection Notes: Month 2, 1 for each student  
Connect to Circle Connection Challenge

**RESOURCES**

Slide Deck  
Empathy Lesson Video  
Optional Teacher Connection Challenges  
Additional Connection Challenges for students

**BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

Throughout the development of this curriculum, the work CASEL has been highly influential in our approach.

From the CASEL website: The CASEL 5 addresses five broad and interrelated areas of competence and highlights examples for each: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The CASEL 5 can be taught and applied at various developmental stages from childhood to adulthood and across diverse cultural contexts. Many school districts, states, and countries have used the CASEL 5 to establish preschool to high school learning standards and competencies that articulate what students should know and be able to do for academic success, school and civic engagement, health and wellness, and fulfilling careers. A developmental perspective to SEL considers how the social and emotional competencies can be expressed and enhanced at different ages from preschool through adulthood. Students' social, emotional, and cognitive developmental levels and age-appropriate tasks and challenges should inform the design of SEL standards, instruction, and assessment. Given that, stakeholders should decide how best to prioritize, teach, and assess the growth and development of the CASEL 5 in their local schools and communities.

For us at Only7Seconds, we know each of these areas are important and develop activities that support you as you work with your students. The elements of our lessons are built around supporting these CASEL 5. When we have students connect with themselves each month that supports the competency of Self-Awareness. Our videos and discussion take the students into the Social Awareness competency. We specifically target Relationship Skills and Self-Management when developing our Connection Challenges. By taking this systematic approach, we arrive at students growing in Responsible Decision-Making. Arming you with skills to directly help students in these areas, sets all members of the school community up to grow connection and for us, to help end loneliness—or, to allow students (and staff) to better reach out for help when they feel loneliness!

We encourage you to use our curriculum and the CASEL site to infuse opportunity for students to grow in a social and emotional way alongside the great academic work you do each and every day.

## LESSON GUIDE

### Hand out the Connection Notes Sheet and have students get out the Circles & Notes pages from last month.

Begin with taking out the Circles of Connection sheet and Notes from last lesson. An important element of the work is to build in a circle of accountability. For students to meet with their Connection Team to review the Connection Challenge from the previous lesson. Have them meet in the small groups of 2-4 from last lesson and talk about how they did with reaching out to people in their circles. Were they successful? Were they surprised or confused by the reactions? Was there a pattern or theme to how people responded? After a small group discussion, share out as a class and then allow time to reflect by completing the first box, Check In, on the Connection Notes worksheet.

### Take the pre-assessment.

This next lesson continues to build on the Circles of Connection. Allow time for students to add to their Circles of Connection sheet—are there people who should be added, moved either in or out on the circle? After the video, there will be more time to talk about the relationships in the circles and the types of things we get from people in each level of the circles.

Introduce Mario as this month's storyteller. Mario is a communications major in college. He is a creative who loves photography, filmmaking, and documenting people and stories. Losing one of his parents at a young age deeply impacted his life, but he has learned the importance of seeking help and mentorship. The relationships with people he looks up to have made him who he is today.

### Show the Video and Discuss

Have students take brief notes in the second box, Video Notes, on the Connection Notes Sheet from Month Two. Watch the entire video all the way through and have a conversation using these questions or ones that make sense for your students. You can pause before discussion and have students complete the questions on the notes page to give them time to process what they have heard.

- Then, start by asking, "Is there anyone in your life that this video makes you think about? Can you reach out and connect with them right now?"
- Allow time for students to text or call someone they are thinking about in the moment.
- Use the questions below to engage in a rich conversation with your students focusing on student engagement. Lead the conversation with the whole group or have small groups answer each question and then share their answers.
- It is vital that all students feel seen in this process so pay close attention to anyone responding in a way to the videos that is unexpected. Follow up with them after the discussion to ensure the video or conversation was not upsetting to them.

Play again, pausing for conversation with the Connection Teams. After the teams discuss, consider debriefing as a class. Before hitting play:

- Start by asking, "Do you have anyone in your life that has made a big impact on you like Graham did for Mario?"
- Think about all the relationships you have, which of those make you feel most connected?
- Reflecting on Mario's story, what do you think it was about Mario that allowed him to change his life so dramatically after losing his mom? And then again after the concussion?

## LESSON GUIDE CONTINUED

- At 2:30, pause and engage with students about Mario's story. He shares his background and experiences of being an immigrant with a family that needs to seek out work away from their children. He talks about having the freedom to be out and about but mentions he did that to avoid being home. His loneliness allows for him to make a lot of questionable decisions. In the moments after losing his mom, he vows to do better, you can see him smile in a very genuine way.
  - Ask students about the relationships they have, is there someone that you would make that kind of change for?

Continue to watch and pause again at 3:50.

- When I hear Mario's story, I see that outside connections have always mattered to him—first it was his friends when he was “out and about” then it was school and sports and clubs. When he lost football due to the concussion, he was not only alone, but in pain. His friend inviting him to church allowed him to reconnect with a group in a new way.
- As you think back over your life, what groups are you a part of outside of school? What role do the people in those groups play in your life?

### Allow time to Connect to Self

Allow time for your students to now connect with themselves and reflect on the conversation and video. Have them spend time thinking about and writing in box three, Connect to Self, on the Connection Notes Sheet for Month Two.

### Introduce this month's Connection Challenge

1. Students review their updated Connections Circle sheet and choose 1-3 people to connect with in the coming days.
2. Students make a plan for connection—text, DM, snap, call, facetime, or write them a note specifically calling out they are thinking about them and appreciate having them in their life; they can also use this time to set up a date with that person to meet for a longer connection.
3. Challenge them to reach out to more than one if they can.

Pay attention to the students that don't seem to engage and help to brainstorm with those students about previous teachers, other students or caring members in the community.

Share with students the information about relationships and how each relationship we are in we get certain things from those relationships. They can consider what they need in general and then set about a plan to fill the need with someone from their circles. An example to share is if they need someone in their life to celebrate the successes, they can pick someone on the sheet and ask them to be their celebration partner for the week—each day they will share with them something that has gone well, and that person will help to reinforce for them. Another example is if they need someone to just listen and not give advice or direction. Have them specifically ask someone they trust to do that—we know from research that everyone cannot play every role for us, and we often don't ask for specifically what we need, helping them to do this is building important lifelong skills.

### Allow time to Connect to Circle

Have the students complete the last box, Connect to Circle, on the Connection Notes Sheet for Month Two.

TO ACCESS THE VIDEO, SLIDES, LESSON  
MATERIALS, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[WWW.SCHOOLS.ONLY7SECONDS.COM](http://WWW.SCHOOLS.ONLY7SECONDS.COM)

