

OBJECTIVE

Students will connect with others based on their common interests and activities.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Video and Lesson Guide
Circles of Connection Sheet, in student portfolio
Connection Notes: Month 5, 1 for each student
Connection Challenge: My History, 1 for each student

RESOURCES

Slide Deck
Optional Teacher Connection Challenges
Communication Templates
Additional Connection Challenges for students

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

As we continue to talk to our students about loneliness, it is important to also remember that at the core of connection is the ability to connect with oneself—to know oneself. Dr. Vivek Murthy, the former US Surgeon General states, “Our ability to connect with other people is driven by our ability to connect deeply with ourselves.”

Research shows that there are many ways to know ourselves and many barriers to that as well. For youth, if they haven't fully decided or accepted who they are, it becomes even more difficult. Powerful results can come from defining the many aspects of self. You can help students to learn more about themselves by giving them prompts that consider who they are in these areas:

- Values
- Interests
- Temperaments
- Activities
- Life Mission
- Strengths

When students have a better sense of who they are in these areas, they can then find connections that complement them in each of the areas. Which leads to the other important concept this month; how relationships ebb and flow over the course of our lives. Teenagers are often devastated when a relationship ends because they haven't had the experience that another one will come. When a friendship is rocky, they often think they did something wrong rather than acknowledging that at different times in our lives we may want or need different things from our friendships. Much of this cannot be easily explained and must be lived through, but we can continue to help students develop additional relationships throughout their circles to illustrate that there are more people in their lives that care than they may think.

For students, being exposed to the different facets of themselves as well as learning that relationships ebb and flow builds their resiliency when faced with difficulties.

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 Connection Notes from last lesson and 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 their reactions to the name tag experience. 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 focuses on thinking about who the students are as complete humans—where they came from and what defines them; to really consider the people that have helped to shape who they are.

Introduce Danny as this month's storyteller. Ever since Danny was a little kid, he played basketball and he is currently playing in college. From the outside, Danny sometimes looked like he had it all together, but there were plenty of times when he felt lonely. Everyone at times is lonely. Danny believes that you must reach out to people you trust, and they will give you support. Life is a marathon, and you must keep on running until the end.

Show the Video and Discuss

Have students take brief notes in the second box, Video Notes, on the Connection Notes Sheet from Month Five. 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.

At 1:18, pause and discuss:

- Danny seems to get the most emotional when he talks about race and his family, did you notice that? What do you think might be coming up for him?
- Are there things you hear in your life that feel insensitive? Is there something we can say to people when they say things like that so they know they have hit a nerve? What might that be?

At 2:18, pause and discuss:

- Danny's identity is as an athlete and as a self proclaimed “tough guy,” how do you think his view of himself is impacting his emotions? What advice would you give him? What can we learn from Danny's story at this point?

LESSON GUIDE CONTINUED

At 4:20, pause and discuss

- Danny talks about losing his friend and his feelings experiencing COVID all at the same time. It seems like that is how emotions work--they are complicated and come up when we don't always expect them. Can you share some emotions that you have felt in the last year that have been layered like his?
- What are strategies you use to get up and out of your house each day?
- When you think about friends or family that might be experiencing complex emotions- what are some things you can do or say that might help?

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 Five.

Introduce this month's Connection Challenge

1. Hand out the shoe templates and share your teacher example.
2. Each student completes the different parts of the shoe with a different life experience that has shaped who they are. Students should color, outline, or shade in the shoe and then cut it out. Names can be included or kept anonymous.
3. Teacher and students display the shoes around the school for students to connect with each other's history
4. When appropriate, have the students complete two shoes and share one with someone important in the student's life.

Share with students the information about how knowing and working with all the parts of your life help to make you more resilient in the future.

Allow time to Connect to Circle

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

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

WWW.SCHOOLS.ONLY7SECONDS.COM



CONNECTION NOTES: MONTHS 2-8

Check In



List your connection team members:

Check in as a group with these questions:

- Did you complete last month's challenge?
- How did it make you feel?
- What relationship are you working on building?
- Who can you reach out to for help if you need it?

Video Notes



Build your empathy as you watch and discuss:

- What do you think the story teller is feeling and how others in their life might react.
- If it was you, what help might you need?
- What would you want from your circle?
- How might you get that help?
- What can you take from this story that will help you build connections?

Engage in group/class discussion.

Connect to Self



There are many ways to check in with yourself, consider these types of questions to get you started:

- What emotions are you feeling?
- Are you feeling lonely in any part of your life?
- Is there something you need to talk to someone about that is sticking with you?
- Have you had a chance to exercise, reflect, and breathe today?
- How does your body feel?
- What thoughts are with you all the time?
- What brings you joy today?
- What are you worried about?

Connect to Circle



By doing this month's Connection Challenge you have an opportunity to check in with someone in your circle, use this space to plan that check in.

- How are you going to complete this month's connection challenge?
- Which relationship in your circle will you be working on?
- Who in your circle needs a check in?
- What do you need from someone in your circle?
- How did checking in help you feel?

MY HISTORY PROJECT

Hand out shoe templates and share teacher example.

Each student should fill out the different parts of the shoe with a different life experience that has shaped who they are. Students then should color, outline, or shade in the shoe and then cut it out. Names can be included or kept anonymous. Teacher/School decides how to display these shoes around the school for students to connect with each other's history.

