

**OBJECTIVE**

Students will connect with their School Community in an intentional way that spreads hope.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

Video and Lesson Guide  
Circles of Connection Sheet, in student portfolio  
Connection Notes: Month 3, 1 for each student  
Hope Notes, sticky notes, bracelets, stickers

**RESOURCES**

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

**BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

This month we are on the third month of watching a video and talking about it—you will notice that many of the questions are the same and that is due to the research on routine and habit. In Charles Duhigg's book, *The Power of Habit*, he talks about how habits can be so routine that we don't even notice them. In other research, we have learned a lot about how identifying and naming emotions helps us to better regulate them. It is the combination of these two bodies of work that we developed our approach. If we can create habits in students where when they hear someone's story they immediately begin to think in terms of empathy, we are creating a habit of empathy. Additionally, when students think about the relationships in their lives, we want them to develop the habit to first look internally—check in with themselves and then turn to think about the relationships. These are potential keystone habits that can impact other areas of their lives as well.

We also know that novelty is important to stimulate the brain and trigger happiness. Our Connection Challenges are built around this feature in the research. Novelty can be as simple as getting a different response from an activity that is a routine because you are doing it with different people. We believe our SHARE Day is an important example of this research—when you spread hope and remember every one, the chance of coming across someone that you make a difference with is big and the chance that it is a different person each month creates that rush of dopamine that helps with happiness.

With all that said, the bottom line is that students might say—we did this last month and you can tell them, yes, and that is on purpose to help you build a routine. And others might say, I didn't connect with this Connection Challenge and you can say, that's okay too, because there will be another one next month or you can choose to connect in a way that makes more sense to you! It all works as long as we are working to build connections in our lives.

A final thought on assessing the work with students, it might see routine to ask the same questions each month about if they feel connected or are they reaching out and that is true, but we also draw on the research that when you ask questions in the same way over time, the questioning itself can lead to changes in behavior. Think about that—if someone asks you if you were safe driving home, over time you will drive more safely—so, we ask each month if they feel more connected and if they have reached out—the questioning helps get the results.

## 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 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 focuses on the work that Only7Seconds has been doing for the longest—creating connections in our communities. We will focus this month on spreading hope to our school community by writing out Hope Notes and placing them around campus.

Introduce Vik as this month's storyteller. Vik is a gay man and a formerly incarcerated filmmaker. He believes that connection is essential for grounding into our true, authentic selves. There was a time in the not so distant past that Vik almost lost his life to addiction. But today, Vik finds his life to be a blessing, he is deeply connected with some of the most amazing people who inspire him and make him—him!

### 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.

- Vik shares the trajectory of his life and how he lost everything and how he has rebuilt. He describes how in his isolation he did horrible things, and, in his redemption, he was able to connect back to all the people in his life that have value. I noticed that he didn't talk about getting the things back that he lost. In what ways do we currently show the people in our lives that they mean more than the things?
  - As you think back over your life, are there people that have stood out? Why or why not?
  - What if Vik was in your life and stole from you—would you be willing to accept his apology and build back a relationship? Have you had to do that with someone?
- As you rewatch the video, pause at 3:00, Vik says he was a ghost. What are the things in your life that matter so much that if you lost them you would think of yourself as a ghost? How can you take inventory now and share those things so you can be reminded of them when you hit hard times?

### 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 Three.

### Introduce this month's Connection Challenge

1. Hand out sticky note packets and Only7Seconds Sticky Note Prompt sheets
2. Have students write at least 7 encouraging sticky notes (they can use the prompts or write their own).
3. Have them place the sticky notes around the school and community—encourage them to get creative.
4. Share with the school community what you are doing and encourage others to take a note for themselves if they feel like it is something that they need to carry with them!

Share with students the information about routine versus novelty in work that they do and how building a routine for connection helps to strength their ability to do it when times are difficult.

### Allow time to Connect to Circle

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

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

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

## STICKY NOTE CONNECTION CHALLENGE

Write at least 7 sticky notes, you can use the prompts here or write your own.

Be sure you include @only7seconds on the bottom of the sticky note so that when people find them, they can find the movement and understand how only 7 seconds of kindness can make a big difference.

Go spread some hope! You can leave them around your school and community. The possibilities are endless so get creative! Here are some ideas to get you started: locker rooms, bathroom stalls and mirrors, car windshields, grocery stores, bus stop benches, or the gym.



1. You are right where you need to be.
2. Having a bad day doesn't make you weak; it makes you human.
3. Check in with yourself. How are you really doing?
4. Taking care of yourself is kind to the people around you.
5. Your worth is not found in what you do, but in who you are.
6. Have an amazing day! You've got this!
7. Just wanted to say, you have purpose. Keep going!
8. You are NOT a burden. You are a gift. You matter here.
9. You are not alone.
10. I hope you have a great day today, glad you're here!
11. You're crushing it!
12. You were given this life because you were strong enough to live it.
13. Be gentle with yourself, you're growing. It's not perfect, that's ok.
14. Chin up, you are doing great! Keep showing up!
15. The world needs you today. Thank you for being here!
16. I'm happy you're alive today.
17. You make our community a better place, thanks for being here.
18. You will rise above your struggles. You are so so strong!
19. Your feelings are valid.
20. It's okay to not have it all figured out right now.
21. You are loved.
22. You can do hard things!
23. It's okay to ask for help, you aren't suppose to do life alone!
24. It's a bad day, not a bad life.
25. Stay hopeful, good things are on the horizon.
26. You have survived 100% of your worst days, you'll get through this one too.
27. If you haven't heard it today— you are loved.
28. It's okay to feel overwhelmed. Take it one day at a time.
29. You bring so much value to the world.
30. You are doing your best. And that is enough.