

Remote Open Circle Meetings-Lessons & Activities Ideas: Review Key Open Circle Vocabulary, Skills and Concepts with a New Twist

All of us have transitioned to remote learning. We know more than ever that continuing SEL instruction and support is vital for our students. Before moving on to planning your next [Open Circle virtual meeting](#), please consider revisiting previous lessons that could help students adjust to this new way of connecting and learning.

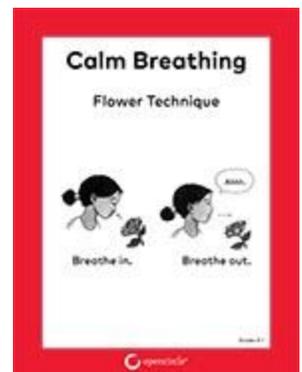
We assume that most of you have already taught some of the lessons that we are highlighting below which provide a great foundation for revisiting the skills and concepts students have already learned in new ways. This is an opportunity for students to relearn, strengthen and practice these skills at home as we continue to build community. Underneath each lesson title are recommended ways of extending and enhancing the skills and concepts that students have already learned.

These are just ideas, please pick and choose, mix and match and modify to meet the needs of your students. In addition to the lessons, you will notice a section entitled “additional suggestions” where you will find activities as well as vocabulary terms and brand new ideas not included in the curriculum that may be useful in supporting your virtual circles.

LESSONS

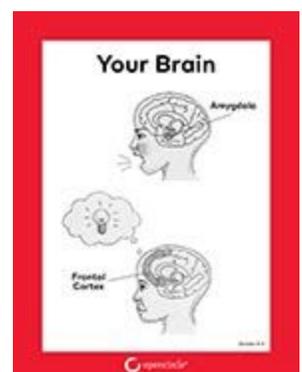
- **Being Calm (Unit 2)**

- Begin and end each meeting with 3 calm breaths
- Ask students to teach flower or balloon breathing to a loved one at home
- Encourage a family member to join one of the video calls with their child. During that time have students practice calm breathing and talk about when might be good times throughout the day to continue to practice (when you are already feeling calm). Have students share some examples of situations of when they may need to use the skill because they may not be feeling calm.



- **Getting Calm when You Feel Upset (Unit 2)**

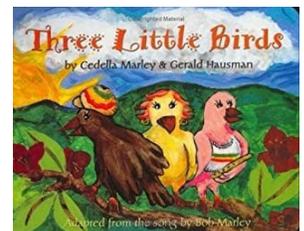
- Review Brain Science using the skill mini-poster, if possible:
- Ask students what they do in addition to calm breathing to stay calm while at home.



(LESSONS continued)

- **Positive Self-Talk (Unit 2)**

- Ask students to share some times at home when they might feel stuck or challenged and may need to use positive self-talk.
- Have students create positive self-talk statements
 - Create posters with positive self-talk statements written on them. Students can get creative and decorate their posters in any way they choose. Ask students to find a special place in their home to hang these positive self talk masterpieces as a daily boost to themselves and those they live with.
 - Create a positive self-talk message board. Students can submit encouraging messages for themselves that can be viewed by all students on the remote learning platform. Alternatively, simply have students submit positive words of encouragement and create a word cloud so everyone can see each other's encouraging words. Which words came up the most for your class?
 - Sometimes it is easier to think of positive things to say to yourself if you imagine you are a friend who you are trying to encourage, "What might you say to cheer them up?"
- Bob Marley's "Three Little Birds"
 - Do a lyric study and have students make connections to what they have learned in Open Circle
 - Here is a [link to the lyrics](https://lyrics.az/bob-marley/-/everything-s-gonna-be-alright.html):
<https://lyrics.az/bob-marley/-/everything-s-gonna-be-alright.html>
 - Bob Marley's daughter, Cedella Marley wrote a book inspired by the song. Check out [Sankofa Read Aloud on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syU2KR9Wp1M) to share with students
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syU2KR9Wp1M>
 - Have students learn the song and incorporate it in sing-alongs throughout remote learning meetups



(LESSONS continued)

- **Cooperating (Unit 3)**

- Ask students what cooperating looks like, sounds like, and feels like?
- Remind students of the many ways they have cooperated (working together to get something done) in the classroom. Ask:
 - What are some of the ways you are cooperating at home?
 - What are some examples of people you have seen at home or in the community working together and cooperating?



ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- **Chair Yoga**

- If using video, choose a few of the options in the Chair Yoga activity to practice with students. This can also be found in the Activities section of your curriculum:

Find a comfortable position in your chair. Put your feet on the floor, and rest your hands on your legs. Bring your attention to your breath. Repeat the following movements 3 times, and combine the movements with breathing deeply – generally, breathing in with the first part of each movement sequence and then breathing out for the second part.

Raising Arms: As you take a breath in, raise your arms over your head and as you lower your arms, breathe out.

Shoulder Shrugs: Next bring your shoulders up to your ears, and then relax them down. Combine this action with breathing. Shoulders up/in breath; Shoulders down/ out breath.

Neck Rolls: Drop your head to your chest – raise your head and turn it to the right. Look up and turn your head to the left. Breathe in/out alternatively with each change of position.

Spinal Flexes: Now we're going to flex the spine. As you breathe in push your chest out and exaggerate the curve of your spine. Now do the opposite – and round your back. Breathe in and out with each flex of the spine.

Side to Side: Both hands over head. Drop your left arm and gently reach your right arm over toward the left. Hands over head. Drop your right arm and gently reach your left arm over to the right.

(Chair Yoga continued)

Spinal Twist: Put your hands on the chair to the right of your body and twist your spine gently. Next, twist to the left side. Breathe in and out as you change sides.

Slow and deep breathing: Just sit at rest and breathe deeply. Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose, slowly.

- **Reflection**

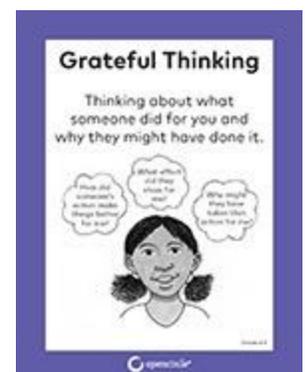
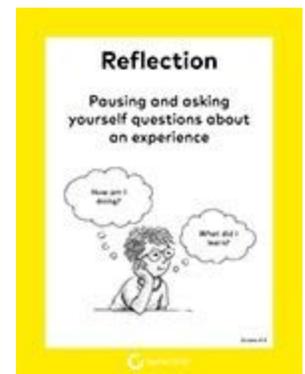
- Remind students of the vocabulary term: Reflection

Reflection: *Pausing and asking yourself questions about an experience.*

- Explain that this is a perfect time for students to strengthen their reflection muscles, here are some ideas for how:

- Ask students to keep an Open Circle Journal

- Keep track of how you are feeling each day using words or pictures. Make note of the date and time of your entries.
- Ask students to reflect on what they are learning, or being reminded about themselves during this time and record their thoughts.
- Ask students to do a daily/weekly reflection on what it is like being home and/or what it is like participating in remote learning.
- Ask students to simply keep a reflection journal that they commit to writing in at least 3 times a week and periodically ask students to share what that experience has been like.
- Gratitude reflection journal activity: Ask students to write three good things (large or small) that have happened for which they are grateful for each day. Ask students to share some of the things they are grateful for and why each good thing might have happened as a closing ritual for your Open Circle Meeting.



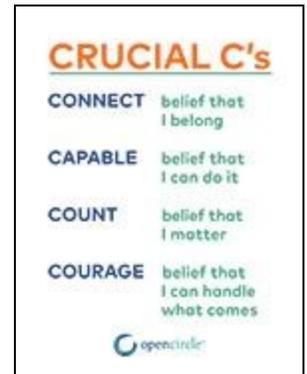
- **Open Circle Check-ins**

Use brief phone calls to check in on how students are doing and remind them of the Open Circle skills they have to manage their emotions during this time.

(Additional Suggestions continued)

- **Remember the Crucial C's**

Now more than ever, as educators we need to pay special attention to how we are getting our Crucial C's met and how we can support children in getting their Crucial C's met in positive ways. Review Crucial C's theory and chart in the resources section of the Curriculum and reflect on some of the ways you and your team are meeting your adult needs and the needs of the children.



- **Family/Parent Open Circle**

We are all in this together! If appropriate for the families of your students, schedule an Open Circle meeting just for the adult caregivers in your students' homes. Caregivers and family members can join a video Open Circle meeting to learn how they can help their children increase the use of Open Circle skills. You might begin by asking participants to share ways they are already encouraging the use of prosocial skills at this time. This Open Circle format honors families/caregivers as the first educators of your students and gets them engaged as partners in remote learning.

Families can help reinforce these skills by using common language used during Open Circle meetings. Examples of the vocabulary words children are learning are available on Open Circle's website in 8 languages.

[Open Circle Program Description and Key Vocabulary](#) (available in 8 languages)

<https://www.open-circle.org/for-families/common-vocabulary>

- **Create an Open Circle Skills Practice Log**

Select an Open Circle skill that will be the focus of each week. Create a form on Google Classroom where students can track what they do daily to practice that particular Open Circle skill. Write back with encouraging words and positive affirmation to each student. Have students share ways they are practicing at home.