

The internet has become an integral part of life, providing easy access to information and people around the world. This access opens limitless potential to support our students' natural curiosity and expand their knowledge. While the internet provides rich opportunities, it is also important to ensure that students understand their rights and responsibilities to be safe online. The Rethink Ed Online Safety curriculum follows the ISTE (International Standards for Technology Education) guidelines and provides lessons that include videos, resources, and activities to help students stay safe online. Through the lessons, students will learn strategies for protecting themselves online, balancing their time online and off, evaluating the accuracy and validity of information online, being respectful to others online, and using technology to stay connected and make a positive difference in the world.

Talking with students about online safety provides them with the tools necessary to use the internet safely and responsibly. The online community provides additional opportunities for students to develop their social and emotional learning skills, including safe and ethical behavior, respect, healthy boundaries, self-knowledge, relationships, actions and consequences, self-control, stress management, and support systems.

Because of their daily interactions with students, teachers can play a key role in helping students understand the benefits and risks of engaging in online activities and develop tools for being safe and responsible online. Teachers also have the opportunity to create a safe place where students can openly discuss their questions and concerns about internet use. In addition, teachers can help identify students who may be experiencing negative effects of too much screen time, scams, or cyberbullying and work with administrators, school counselors, and families/caregivers to support the students.

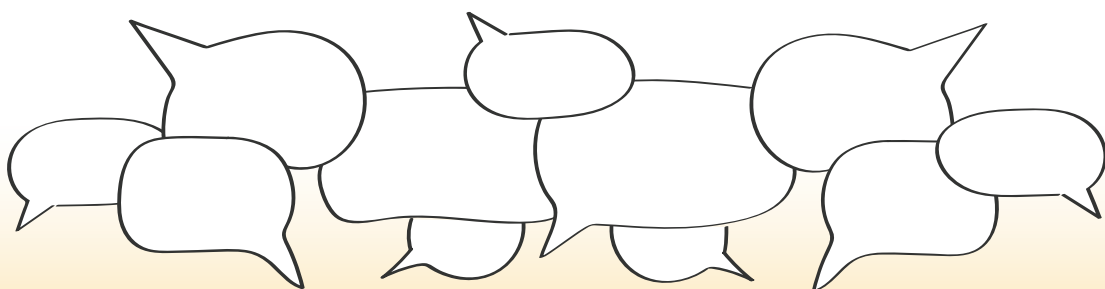
BEFORE THE LESSON

Review the Rethink Ed Teacher Training for Online Safety

It is recommended that all school personnel, including support staff, participate in the *Online Safety* training together. In addition, all personnel are encouraged to think about their own internet use, including how they benefit from the internet and the guidelines they use to protect themselves from online risks.

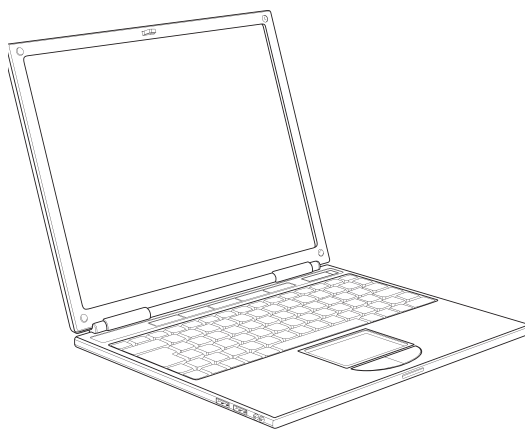
Preview the Lessons

Read the lessons and choose the activities that fit the needs of the students and the time available. The lessons are designed to be open-ended and provide opportunities for teachers to make the lessons their own. Consider involving the students in the planning of the lessons, allowing them to lead and move the lessons in the direction that meets their needs.



Recognize the Signs that Students May Be Experiencing Negative Effects of Online Activities

Too much time online, as well as experiencing negative interactions online, can contribute to students' social, emotional, and learning difficulties. Take note of the signs that may indicate a problem. While none of the signs are absolute indicators that a student is being negatively impacted by their online use, they are indicators that the student may need additional support to get their needs met. If you notice any of these warning signs in a student, it is important to follow the reporting guidelines according to your school's protocol.



Connect with the School Counselor, Community Leaders, or Mentors

Connect with the school counselor or other community leaders to let them know when the lessons will be presented. Depending on the needs of your students, consider inviting guest speakers to share their experiences of using the internet to communicate with others or change the world. Introducing students to people who use technology to reach their goals and benefit others provides them with an opportunity to think about positive ways they can use the internet.

Inform Students and Families of When Online Safety Will Be Discussed

It can be helpful to give students and families advanced notice of when the *Online Safety* lessons will be presented. The Home Connection letter provides families with information about the lessons, as well as tips to keep their teens safe online. It also encourages families to provide the school staff with any pertinent information regarding their teen's experiences online.

Take Care of You

It is important for any staff member who is teaching a lesson about online safety to take time to reflect on their own online experiences, including difficulties balancing time on and offline, experiences with cyberbullying, or strategies used to evaluate the information online. Teachers who feel unprepared to teach the lesson should speak to the school administrator to address their needs and/or make arrangements for another staff member to teach the lesson.

Signs Indicating Too Much Time Online

- difficulty staying awake at school
- loss of interest in activities offline
- lying about time spent online
- anger when asked to put devices away
- difficulty staying focused
- weight gain from reduced physical activity
- headaches and body aches
- preoccupation with online activities

Signs Indicating Cyberbullying

- loss of interest in online activities
- wariness of others
- difficulty paying attention
- consistently tired or lethargic
- overwhelming sadness
- unexplained bursts of anger

Signs Indicating Contact with a Predator / Exposure to Inappropriate Content

- being secretive about their online activity
- switching screens when approached
- unexplained bursts of emotion
- preoccupation with non-age-appropriate topics
- being secretive about a new relationship and/or receiving unexplained gifts or money

DURING THE LESSON

Follow the Lesson Plan

The *Online Safety* lessons provide a video, discussion questions, activities, and resources to guide students through the lesson. The role of the teacher is to determine which parts of the lessons meet the needs of the students in the time available.

Keep the Focus on Online Safety

The discussion questions and activities are designed to develop the awareness and tools for being safe online. The discussion questions and activities focus on understanding the risks and the benefits of using the internet.

If a student discloses contact with a stranger or predator online or exposure to inappropriate or overwhelming content such as violence or pornography, respectfully interrupt the student. Stay calm and refrain from showing signs of being shocked or upset. Reassure the student that they did nothing wrong and that you want to provide them with the support they need. After the lesson, accompany the student to speak with the counselor as soon as reasonably possible.

If the student discloses acts of bullying or violence they have experienced or witnessed online, acknowledge their feelings, and connect the student with the school counselor and/or the appropriate administrators to address the situation. Talk with a school administrator to ensure that protections for preventing cyberbullying among students are in place, known by the students and staff, and upheld. Remember that as a mandated reporter you must report any incidents or suspicions of harm against a student as per your school's protocols.

Respect Students' Right to Pass

Allow students the right to pass on any discussion or activity. Make note of a student who shows signs of distress or changes in behavior during the lesson. Check in with the student following the lesson. Tell them what was observed, allow space for the student to respond, and offer support. Encourage the student to talk with the school counselor and/or other community resources to address any concerns the student may have about online safety.

AFTER THE LESSON

Make Online Safety Education an Ongoing Priority

We live in a digital world. The internet and digital devices are tools for learning. Continue to engage your students in discussions regarding online safety, balancing time on and offline, evaluating the accuracy and validity of online information, appropriate and respectful interactions online, and ways to use the internet to make the world a better place.

Provide Students with the Resources They Need

Be sure that students know who to contact should they want to talk or have additional questions about online safety. Work with your staff to create a list of mentors, community resources, and contact information for local agencies that offer support and education for any student who has experienced cyberbullying or harassment or has been approached by a predator or scammer online.

Help Students Develop SEL Skills

Follow the lessons on online safety with SEL lessons on developing safe and ethical behavior, actions and consequences, respect, self-control, healthy boundaries, stress management, self-control, relationships, and support systems. The development of social and emotional learning skills can boost one's ability to develop the emotional stamina to meet life's challenges on and offline. See *Beyond the Lesson* on the last page of the lesson plan for a list of SEL topics and lessons.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why am I being asked to teach about online safety?

Technology and the internet are tools for learning and as such we need to help our students understand the benefits and risks of these tools. We live in a digital world that is rapidly changing. We need to help our students protect themselves against predators, scammers, and cyberbullies, while providing them with tools to use the internet to access information, evaluate the validity of the information, and use the information to make the world a better place.

How can I help my students maintain a balance of online and offline activities?

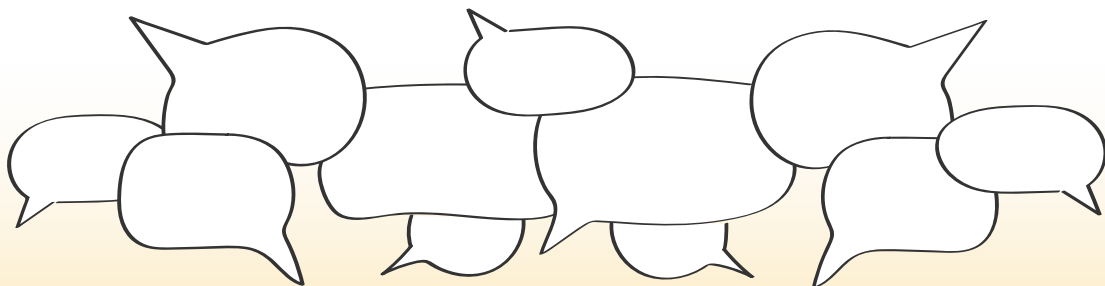
You have little control over your students' screen time activities at home, but through education and awareness you can help students to understand the importance of exercising the body, relaxing the mind, and connecting with others offline. You can also help students identify activities they enjoy on and offline and encourage students to maintain a healthy balance. Provide parents and caregivers with information about the risks of too much time online.

What should I do if I suspect that one of my students is experiencing cyberbullying, being exposed to inappropriate images or information online, or being contacted by a predator?

Talk with the student to assess the situation. Reassure the student that it is not their fault. Validate their feelings and let them know that you want them to feel safe online. Reach out to your administrator, school counselor, and/or the student's parents/caregivers to determine the best way to support the student. As a mandated reporter, you are required to report any signs of child abuse or dangerous situations as per your school's protocols.

How can I help a student who has experienced cyberbullying?

First, you can help by providing a safe and caring classroom where the student feels like they belong and are seen and accepted. Carving out space to talk about and accept feelings, as well as ways to manage their feelings, will empower students to meet the challenges they face with growing confidence. See the *Strategies for Community Circles* Teacher Resource for additional tips for creating space for regular, safe, and caring discussions. In addition, the video *Creating a Safe and Caring Classroom* (available in the Teacher Training section of the platform) provides tips on how to make the classroom a place where all students feel seen and validated.



Strategies for Community Circles

Community Circles are an integral part of creating a safe and caring classroom where all members of the class experience a sense of belonging and a belief that their presence matters. A Community Circle provides a place to connect where all members of a classroom can be seen, heard, and respected.

PURPOSE

Community Circles serve a range of purposes, including building trust and connection among class members, checking in on the wellbeing of all members, addressing conflict and harm, and modeling and practicing social and emotional learning (SEL) skills.

In some classrooms, circle gatherings may be used for taking attendance, sharing the day's schedule and announcements. While these activities are worthwhile, they are typically teacher-directed activities. In order to create a safe and caring classroom, Community Circles must provide a place where all members have an equal voice. During a Community Circle, the role of the teacher is the same as the other members of the community of learners.

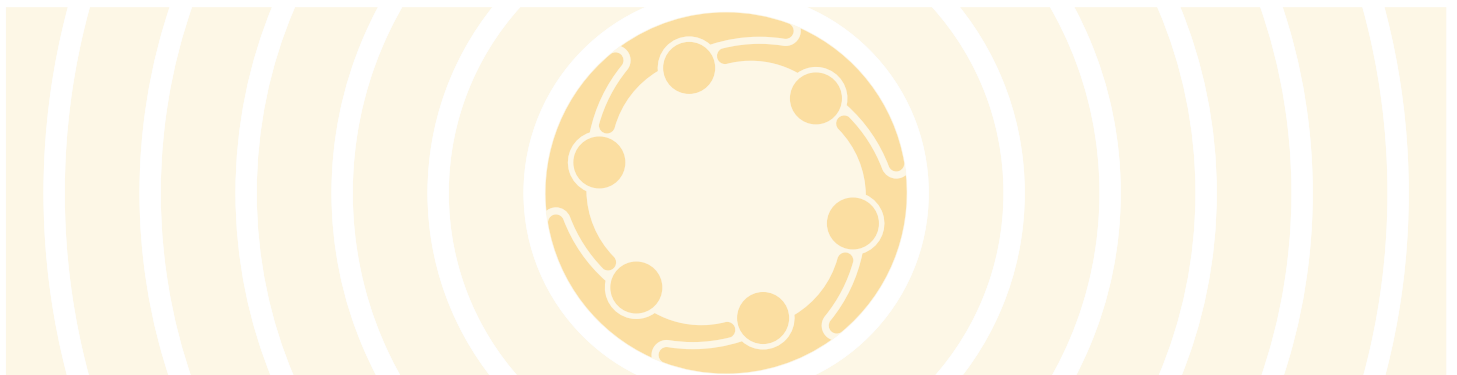
It is recommended that Community Circles become a regular classroom practice in order to establish trust and connection and to check in on the wellbeing of each member. These circle gatherings may include fun questions or topics to discuss, such as asking students to share:

- one positive/one negative thought about a topic (i.e. Rose / Thorn or Glow / Grow),
- two adjectives to describe how they're feeling,
- their favorite movie, book, activity, etc., or
- a memorable childhood event.

Once community has been established, these circles can be a safe place to process and/or resolve:

- misunderstandings or arguments between students or groups of students,
- experiences of inequity or exclusion among students or groups of students,
- exciting, challenging, or difficult events,
- confusion about an assignment or class agreement that warrants a discussion, or
- questions or curiosities around a lesson or topic of study.

In addition, Community Circles can provide a restorative alternative to punishment when a member of the class has broken an agreement or caused harm. Instead of resorting to punishment, which can isolate and marginalize students, often disproportionately impacting Black and Indigenous students and students of color, restorative practices treat harmful behavior as an opportunity for learning.



PRINCIPLES

A Community Circle is an intentional space where members grow and change through self-awareness, social connection, empathy, conflict resolution, and restorative justice. In order to be a safe place for all members, Community Circles embrace some common principles.

Principle 1: A Community of Learners

The Community Circle challenges the tradition that places the teacher as the holder of all knowledge in the classroom. Instead the Community Circle is a place where every member is recognized for having knowledge to share. All members, including teacher and students, see themselves as learners, taking both the responsibility for their own learning and pride in their contribution to the learning of others.

Principle 2: Value of Individuals

While the Community Circle is committed to the collective growth and development of all its members, it simultaneously embraces the inherent worth of each individual. Diversity is celebrated as each member is welcomed and supported in their own journey toward understanding their unique abilities and challenges.

Principle 3: Core Values

The Community Circle is a place to honor, practice, and support core values, including connection, trust, honesty, respect, confidentiality, and authenticity. Each member of the community has a responsibility to uphold these values with compassion toward themselves and others.

Principle 4: Space to Grapple

The Community Circle is a safe space for navigating difficult conversations, embracing discomfort, and moving beyond discomfort to experience social and emotional growth as all members. Community Circles allow for contradiction, complexity, and nuance, recognizing that not all conversations end in agreement. The Community Circle strives to ensure that every member feels seen, heard, understood, and respected.

Principle 5: Common Goal to Restore and Transform

Instances of harm in the classroom must be addressed when they arise and approached with care and compassion. When conflict or harm occurs among class members, Community Circles provide a place for all members to share their experience so that a fuller picture can emerge. The Community Circle is a place where all members seek to restore relationships and grow as individuals.



PRACTICES

The Circle

Establishing a meeting place and a routine for gathering in a circle is essential for building community. The circle formation, with every member at the same level, allows anyone at any point of the circle to be the focal point or the speaker. The circle formation also allows the role of speaker to shift easily from one speaker to the next.

Primary teachers may already have a circle established on a rug. Other classes may need to determine a quick and simple routine for moving chairs, desks, or bodies into a circle. Providing personal space for each member, using carpet squares, dots or other markers on the carpet, chairs, or desks is important for all members to feel included. The teacher and other adults should be seated as members of the circle. In the case of a community member requiring sitting accommodations, an effort should be made to organize all members at the same level.

Agreements

Agreements are standards that all members agree to in order to communicate effectively and respectfully in the Community Circle. All members of the community collaborate in creating agreements and assume the responsibility of following and maintaining those agreements with one another. The agreements should be fluid and changeable, able to be added to or changed as needed. Agreements may extend to all classroom interactions but are especially important to establish and adhere to during the Community Circle.

One way to allow all members to participate in the creation of the circle agreements is to ask students to think about how they would like to be treated as members of a community of learners. Make a list of the students' responses. Use the students' language as much as possible. Once the list is exhausted, ask students to group similar responses together and work together to agree on language that all members are comfortable with. Consensus must be reached before an agreement can be established. Invite students who are struggling with a proposed agreement to suggest an alternate agreement until all members agree.

Once the initial agreements are determined, they should be made visible to all members during a Community Circle. Consider inviting interested students to work together to create posters or a bulletin board, highlighting the community agreements.

When first introducing the Community Circle, it may be helpful to review the agreements at the beginning of each circle. Revisit the agreements as needed. Encourage all group members to take responsibility for adhering to the agreements and, when necessary, gently reminding others to do the same.

Talking Piece

A talking piece can be a helpful tool to aid the discussions in the Community Circle. A talking piece can help to establish and direct focus to the speaker as the speaker changes during a discussion.

A talking piece may be anything – feather, stick, rock, etc. – that can easily be passed from one member to another. Some classes choose an item based on a classroom theme or subject (i.e. a magnifying glass in a science class or a stuffed octopus in class with an ocean theme). Other classes keep a basket of talking pieces and allow a piece to be chosen prior to the circle discussion.

SUGGESTED FORMAT

Because all Community Circles serve different purposes, they also may have different components. The following is a sample format that may be adapted to meet needs of the circle and the community.

Intention

Setting an intention for each Community Circle helps to set expectations for the circle for everyone. The intention can be set by any member of the community. Empower all members to request a Community Circle to talk about anything that they feel needs to be addressed by all class members. The intention should be stated at the start of the circle by the member setting the intention.

Warm Up

Prior to beginning the discussion, invite all group members to focus on the intention. The purpose of the warm-up is to prepare all group members to be fully present during the Community Circle. Depending on the intention, the Community Circle may begin by:

- answering a silly or inspiring question,
- taking a few deep breaths,
- noticing the emotions in the body,
- freezing and melting into a calm mindset, or
- sharing a quote,
- wiggling or stretching the body,
- tensing and relaxing different parts of the body,
- listening to music, podcast, or visualization

Discussion

During the discussion, the group addresses the intention. Open discussions can build trust and lead to surprising learning moments. The role of the teacher during Community Circles is to participate as a member of circle and avoid correcting misconceptions or guiding the conversation. Instead all members should be allowed to work through concepts amongst themselves. Allowing all members to grapple with the topics without intervention by the teacher can help set the expectation that there is not always one easy or correct answer. The only time that teacher intervention is appropriate is to intervene when something harmful, such as racism, sexism, or homophobia comes up. Interrupting harmful statement by calling members in, rather than calling them out, models for students strategies to interrupt harmful attitudes wherever they occur. Some ways to call members in include posing questions such as:

- What was your intention when you said that?
- How might your words be misunderstood by someone else?
- What assumptions are you making about _____ ?
- How might your words affect someone else?

Closing

The group member who set the intention should also initiate the closing and suggest a way to close the circle. A closing may include:

- a summary of what was discussed,
- thanking each member for their participation,
- asking each member to share one takeaway from the discussion,
- a closing activity such as shake it off or rose, bud, thorn,
- reciting or listening to an inspirational song, poem, statement,
- noticing and accepting the emotions that may have surfaced during the discussion, or
- taking a moment of silence to reflect on the discussion.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

Encourage all members to have patience during a Community Circle. Not all Community Circles will flow smoothly. It takes time to build trust and it takes practice to develop the communication skills to have transforming discussions. The following are some additional strategies that may help to facilitate a Community Circle discussions:

- Encourage members of the group to use nonverbal motions like thumbs up, thumbs down, and thumbs sideways or the American Sign Language motions for applause or thank you to engage in the conversation without speaking or interrupting the speaker.
- Consider setting a timer for some conversations to allow equal time for members to speak.
- Encourage respect for all members' right to pass. Remind all members that trust takes time to build, and no one should feel pressured to share until they feel comfortable doing so.
- Consider providing a signal that cues members that it is time for the Community Circle. For example, the community may use a clapping rhythm or a song to move in and out of each circle time.
- Be mindful of the attention span of the members of the Community Circle and bring the circle to a close as determined by the time you have available or the interest of the members.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS

The Community Circle should be a time of authentic and equitable sharing among all members of the group. Community Circles are a useful compliment to Rethink Ed SEL lessons, as they provide an organic environment for students to practice the SEL skills that they are learning. Communities Circles can provide a space for practicing:

- active and reflective listening skills,
- listening with curiosity,
- non-judgmental listening,
- using the 'I-message',
- communicating through body language,
- empathy and compassion to better connect with another person's experience,
- self-control while waiting to speak,
- identifying and managing emotions that come up in a difficult conversation,
- self-advocacy to get needs met ,
- taking turns,
- speaking from personal experience,
- apologizing, forgiving, and shifting behavior,
- embracing discomfort as a sign of learning, and
- standing against racist, sexist, homophobic, or other harmful language.

While the Community Circle is a great time to model these skills, it is not the time to provide instruction on these skills. Instead, make a mental note of the interactions of the members of the group and use that information to inform you about the social and emotional skills that may be helpful to teach and/or reinforced in your class. During an explicit lesson on an SEL skill, it can be helpful to call out healthy communication that you noticed during a Community Circle. For example, calling attention to students who used the 'I-message' during a discussion or a student who showed self-advocacy to get their needs met.



Strategies for Effective Class Discussions



Discussions are an excellent teaching tool to stimulate students' thinking and lead them to new insights and understanding. Whether the content of the discussion is social or academic in nature, effective discussions can provide teachers with immediate and on-going assessment of students' knowledge and understanding.

Discussions are used throughout the Rethink SEL student curriculum to provide an opportunity for students to talk about the key concepts and strategies and reflect on their own learning.

Teacher Role

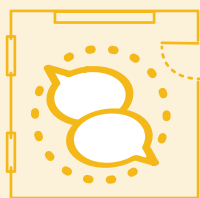


The role of the teacher in discussions cannot be overstated, especially with young students, at the beginning of the year, or with students who are new to discussions. As the students progress in their ability to engage in transformative discussions, the leadership for discussions, including the questions to be discussed, should be released to the students. The following are some ways to make the discussions in your classroom more effective.



Create a Safe and Caring Classroom

Research shows that students' affective needs must be met in order to learn. Students need to feel safe in order to participate actively in discussions. They need to feel like what they have to say matters and that they won't be judged for errors or differing opinions. Refer to the *Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* video and Teacher Resources available in the Rethink Ed SEL Training Series for suggestions on making your classroom a place where students feel safe and cared for.



Organize the Classroom to Support Discussion

The best discussions involve communication between students, not just between teacher and students. To make this possible, arrange the seating so that students can see each other, such as in a circle or semicircle. For many classes, especially in the elementary grade, organizing desks in cooperative groups also promotes effective discussions.



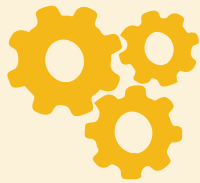
Have a Clear Purpose for the Discussion

Good discussions have a purpose and the purpose should be known. If the purpose of the discussion is a quick check for understanding, let students know that up front. In the case of the discussions that follow the SEL videos, consider writing the objective of the lesson on the board prior to showing the video. Displaying discussion questions and setting a time frame for the discussion can also help keep everyone on topic.



Ask Good Questions

Good discussions begin with good questions. While knowledge and comprehension questions have a place in discussions, true learning occurs at the applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating levels as we ask our students to use their knowledge and understanding. The discussion questions in the Rethink Ed SEL lessons have been written with Bloom's Taxonomy in mind, but you as the teacher know your students and know best how to move the questions to the place where the discussion can change your students' lives.



Encourage Students' Thoughtful Responses

Here are a few tips to encourage thoughtful responses and active participation in classroom discussions.

- Ask a question and wait. If this is hard for you, count to a least 5 in your head before calling on a student to respond.
- Ask a question and encourage students to discuss with a partner or in small groups before discussing with the whole class. This allows everyone a chance to be heard and also gives quieter students time to articulate their thoughts.
- Use a structure for including everyone in the discussion. For example, write students' names on popsicle sticks and draw sticks randomly until all students' names have been drawn or provide students with 3 tokens and collect one token each time the student responds with the expectation that everyone uses all their tokens.
- For sensitive topics, allow students to respond anonymously by providing notecards or slips of paper for the students to write their responses. Read the responses aloud, organizing similar responses together.
- Positively reinforce students' responses by showing interest. For example:
 - make eye contact with the student
 - use the student's name
 - restate the student's response
 - ask for feedback to be sure that you understand
 - write their ideas on the board
 - make connections between students' responses
 - use non-verbal communication such as smiling and nodding



Bring the Discussion to a Close

Announce with the discussion is ending and ask if there are any final comments or questions. Summarize the key ideas of themes of the discussion.

Guidelines for Class Discussions



Whether the discussion is academic or social, such as a class meeting, it is important to establish some basic guidelines and review them as needed. These guidelines should be part of the overall culture in your classroom that provides a safe and caring place where all students feel part of a community of learners. Consider having older students come up with their own set of guidelines based off of these general guidelines.



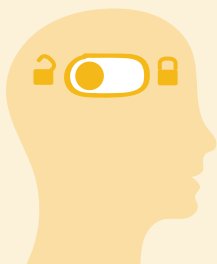
Participate

Set the expectation that everyone participates in the discussion. This comes naturally in safe and caring classrooms where all students feel like their contributions matter. If this becomes an issue in your class, consider how you can build a closer community of learners and/or use some additional structures that include everyone in the discussion.



Actively Listen to Others

Model active listening for your students and explicitly teach your students active listening strategies. Actively listening also limits side conversations as everyone should be listening to the person speaking.



Be Open-Minded

It's important to help students see discussions as part of the learning process, by focusing on the quality of questions. When discussions are viewed as part of the learning process, students are more apt to accept differing opinions or alternative ways of thinking. Being open-minded allows learners to change their thinking as they learn new information or new perspectives. Being open-minded also promotes respect for differing opinions of others.



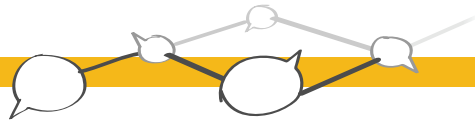
Stay on Topic

It's easy for discussions to move in a different direction, and sometimes that's okay. But typically the most effective discussions stay on topic so as to meet the objective of the discussion. Writing the objective of the discussion on the board, can help keep the discussion on topic.



Be Respectful

This is a summative guideline that is defined by the preceding guidelines and should be part of the class culture. But it may at times be important to remind student to keep the focus on the content, rather than on personalities.



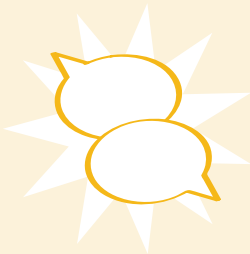
Discussion structures are helpful for organizing and structuring class discussions. There are many different discussion strategies and many variations on each structure. Structures are helpful when learning to lead discussions or teaching students to participate in discussions. The following is a list of some basic discussion structures that can be adapted to fit various discussions, grade levels, and teaching styles.



Class Meetings

There are two common uses for a class meeting. One is a general gathering initiated by the teacher to check in with the physical, emotional, and social health of the students. In elementary classrooms these meetings may be used to take attendance, make announcements, review the schedule, and set a positive tone for the day. These meetings help to build community and provide the teacher with information about the readiness of their students to learn.

The other type of class meeting is initiated by the teacher or students with the focus on solving a problem. These meetings usually arise out of the frustration of the teacher, a student, or a group of students. Often these meetings focus on a social problem that students work together to resolve.



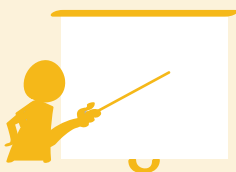
Think, Pair, Share

This strategy allows everyone time to think and a chance to respond. Too often because of the natural need for reinforcement, teachers call on the first student to raise their hand, leaving the rest of the class unengaged. A couple of variations of this format include Turn and Talk and Popcorn Share. Turn and talk can be used to allow students to share their preferences or opinions. Popcorn Share is used to quickly elicit short (often one word) responses from all of the students.



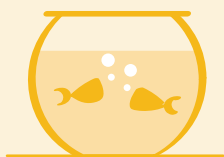
Active Response

The Active Response strategy can be used to quickly determine the students' understanding of a concept during whole group instruction or discussion. The teacher poses a question, provides time for students to think, and then signals the students to reveal their responses. Active responses include thumbs up/ thumbs down; stand/sit; holding up fingers to indicate a preference; response cards, or individual white boards.



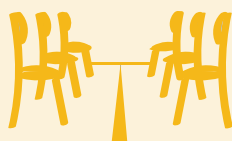
Socratic Seminar

This discussion structure is used to go deeper into understanding a text or a topic. The defining key of the Socratic Seminar is the use of evidence to support an opinion. All participants are asked to refer to the text, the video, or an outside source to support their contribution.



Fishbowl

Students are seated in a circle with two students in the center. The two students in the middle have a conversation or role play a situation using a specific skill. The students on the outside circle observe and take notes about the interaction. When the students in the center are finished, the other students share their observations and provide feedback.



Philosophical Chairs

This discussion structure can be used to debate an issue. A statement is read and students move to one side of the room depending on whether they agree or disagree with the statement. Groups discuss reasons for their opinions and take turns defending their positions.



Pyramid Discussions

Pyramid discussions start with a rich question to discuss or an opinion that needs to be ranked or 'settled'. Have the students share in pairs, then have pairs form groups of 4 to discuss. Then have the groups of 4 form groups of 8, and then 16, until the class as a whole is discussing the topic and reaching a consensus.



Structures to Promote Participation

Particularly in classes with young students or students who are new to discussions, it may be helpful to provide structures to ensure that everyone participates. Some structures that promote participation include:

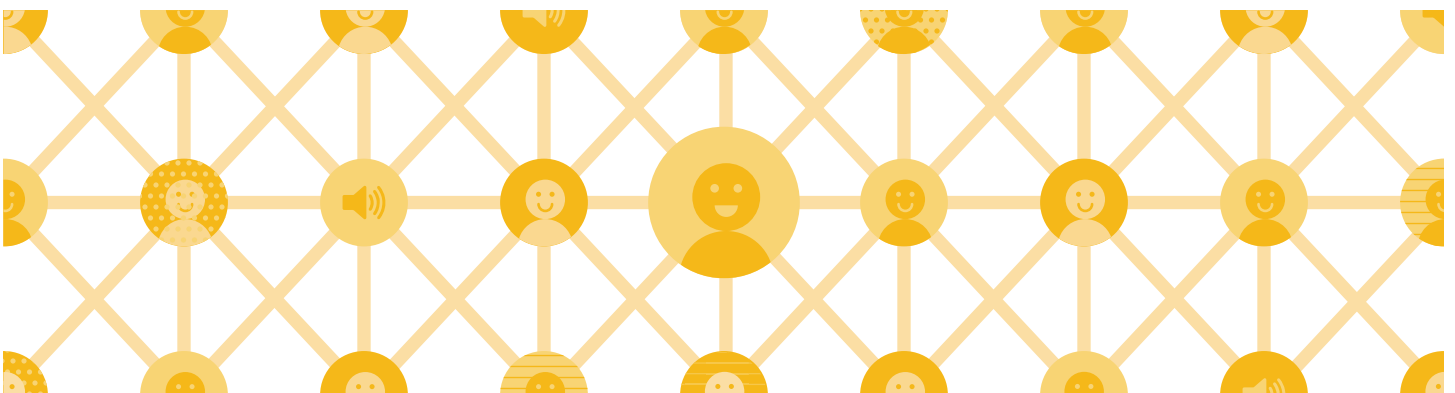
- A Talking Tool (Talking Stick or other item) is passed from one speaker to the next without returning to a speaker until everyone has had a chance to speak.
- Popsicle Sticks with each student's name are placed in cup. The teacher randomly draws sticks, calling on the student whose name is on the stick to talk or respond to a question.
- Class Rosters can be used to check off names of students who participate in discussions and participation points can be given for extra incentive.
- Three Tokens are given to each student at the beginning of the class period. Each time the student participates in the discussion the turn in a token. The goal is for everyone to turn in all three tokens. This also helps the talkative student be more selective about what they use their tokens to share.

Strategies for the Virtual Classroom

Whether you find yourself teaching online by choice or by default, the following strategies will provide suggestions for teaching the Rethink Ed lessons in your virtual classroom. Strategies are provided for presenting information, engaging students in rich and impactful discussions, and facilitating group work for practicing key skills.

General Strategies

- Meet with your Professional Learning Community (PLC) or grade level group to become familiar with your Learning Management Software (LMS) and the particular needs of your students. Once you are familiar with the protocols of your system, it will be easier to adapt the Rethink Ed lessons.
- Take time to teach students how to use the LMS that you will be using, including how to navigate the system and how to find and post assignments, as well as behavioral expectations for the virtual classroom.
- Address the technical needs of your students, including their access to devices and internet connection in order to participate in your virtual classroom. Work with your district and school administrators to ensure that all students have reliable access.
- Review the entire lesson, including the overview, objectives, and vocabulary. Choose the activities that fit your time constraints and the needs of your students. Determine how you will structure the lesson for your virtual classroom. Research has shown that attention drops more quickly in a virtual setting, so provide students with shorter lessons and/or more breaks.
- Address the affective needs of your students. Not all students will be comfortable in a virtual class meeting environment. While checking in with your students is important, respect that some students may feel uncomfortable showing themselves in their home environment or may find it difficult to find a quiet location for class. Allow students to choose preset backgrounds available on your LMS or to attend the class meeting in audio mode only.
- Build community within your virtual classroom. Create a space where students feel safe and cared for. This may include beginning and/or ending your class meetings with an activity to check in with how students are feeling or planning fun, social events for students to interact with each other and help you to connect with students on a personal level.



Presenting Information

The Learn part of each lesson begins with a video that presents the objective and strategies for meeting the objective. In addition, many of the Practice and Dive Deeper activities provide a short video, PowerPoint slides, or audio file to support the learning objective. Here are some options for presenting this information in your virtual classroom.

Share Your Screen

Present the information synchronously in your virtual classroom, using the screen share option. Cue the video, slides, or audio files to your computer before class. During a class meeting, play the video or show the slides with your shared screen. Using the screen share feature allows you to answer questions and discuss the information in real time.

Use Individual Devices

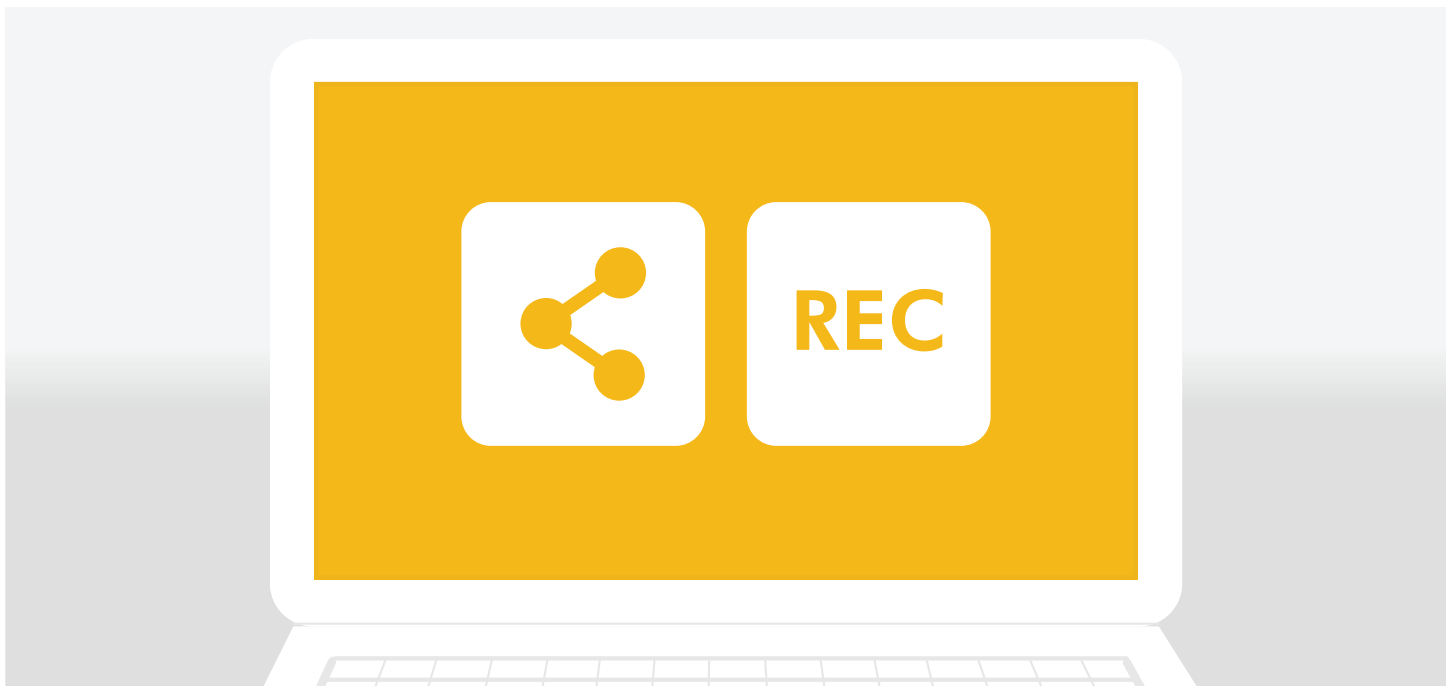
Assign the video, slides, or audio files to the Rethink Ed SEL and Mental Health Student Center, along with any corresponding materials. Have the students watch or listen on their individual devices, during a class meeting. Mute the class and provide time for students to review the materials. Then, unmute and discuss.

Engage Students Asynchronously

Assign the video, slides, or audio files to the Student Center. Have the students view or listen independently. Encourage the students to respond to questions and/or ask questions on your class discussion board or ask the student to come prepared to discuss at your next class meeting.

Pre-record Additional Information

Although most of the strategies and key information for the Rethink Ed SEL and Mental Health lessons are presented in the Learn video, consider pre-recording any additional information such as instructions for completing an activity or reading from a passage of a literature book, picture book, or news article and posting it to your virtual classroom for students to view on their own time to supplement or stand in for synchronous instruction. Then come together to discuss, complete additional activities, or reflect on the information provided.



Hosting Discussions

Engaging students in rich and impactful discussions is an essential part of the Rethink Ed lessons. Discussions are an excellent way to stimulate students' thinking and lead them to insights and understanding.

Discussions During a Class Meeting

Post Questions Prior to the Discussion

Provide students with the questions that will be discussed prior to the class meeting or encourage students to post their own questions in the chat feature during a class meeting.

Host Discussions with Smaller Groups of Students

Divide your class into smaller groups for discussion, using the meeting room feature. Consider asking a volunteer to take notes of the discussion on a shared document that can be viewed by students in other groups. Encourage students to review and comment on the discussions from other groups.

Provide Structures for Student Response during a Class Meeting

To make sure that all students' voices are heard during a virtual class discussion, consider setting a time limit per response. Some of the following structures can also be used to provide an opportunity for all students to share.

Quick Checks: Post a prompt in the chat to use as a warm-up, to check for understanding, or for a quick reflection. Have students respond using the chat and/or reaction features.

Students can also respond using a personal whiteboard or writing on a sheet of paper and holding up their response during a class discussion.

Active Response: If your LMS chat feature has a reaction feature, encourage students to respond using smiley faces, hand claps, and thumbs up. Or teach students a few responses using American Sign Language, such as applause or I don't understand. Students can also use these strategies to respond to other students' responses.

Popcorn Share: Ask each student to respond with one word or a short phrase.

Pass the Popcorn: Call on a student to respond. When the student has finished their response, have them call on a classmate to respond.

Raise Hand: Teach students to use the 'raise hand' feature. This avoids students talking over each other and allows every student to have a chance to share.

Spider Discussions: Share a discussion question prior to the class meeting and ask students to prepare a written response. During the class meeting, ask one student to share their response. Encourage other students to agree, disagree, or build on the response, adding reasons for their statement. Encourage all students to respond. As students respond, track the flow of the conversation, drawing lines between names, and the responses. After the discussion, show students the 'web' of conversation.

Discussions on a Class Discussion Board

Provide students with discussion questions and encourage them to respond to one or more of them on the discussion board. Provide suggestions for responding to their classmates such as:

Compliment – I like ...

Connect – I also ...

Comment – I agree/disagree with... because

Question – I wonder...

Completing Activities and Projects

Rethink Ed lessons provide a variety of activities to help students practice and develop key SEL skills and protective strategies. Many of these activities are designed to be completed in small group, although some can be adapted to be used as a class.

Individual Student Written Responses

Here are some different strategies for using activities to respond individually. Choose the strategy that works best for the activity and for your virtual classroom.

- Assign written activities to the Student Center for students to complete online.
- For activities that do not have activity pages, assign the activity and provide instruction for student to take a photo or write a description of the completed activity and post to your class discussion board or online classroom.
- Post a prompt into your class discussion board for students to respond to.

Small Group Activities

Most LMS provide an option to share links to allow students to meet in small groups. Learn the protocol for your particular system.

- Take time to talk about the expectations of working in groups and supporting one another. Display the *Tips for Online Group Work* Student Resource and talk about strategies for helping students manage their time and work effectively with their group.
- Assign roles (or have groups assign roles) to each student in the group so everyone contributes and feels responsibility for their role.
- Assign the *Tips for Online Group Work* Student Resource to the Student Center to review during the small group work.
- Join students' meetings to check on their progress, answer questions, and help students problem solve.

Skits and Scenarios

Assign groups of students to a meeting room to discuss scenarios and/or prepare skits. If scenarios are provided in the lesson materials, assign them to the Student Center for students to view. Schedule a class meeting to allow students to present their skits.

Stations

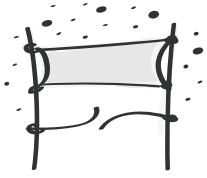
Assign any resources or activity pages for the stations to the Student Center for students to view. Organize groups of students into meeting rooms to discuss the content and add to the shared document. Then have students 'rotate' by using the link to the next "station" (activity/website/document). At each station students can work together to discuss and engage with the station. Schedule time to meet in your virtual classroom to reflect as a class.

You can also post station activities into the chat box, the class discussion board, or a shared platform and have students post their ideas and make comments.

Projects

Some Rethink Ed activities are projects, requiring additional time and/or preparation beyond a typical class period. Assign the project to the Student Center. Organize students into small groups and assign each group to a meeting room to discuss the project. Check in with small groups to determine their progress, answer questions, and help students problem solve.

Tips for Online Group Work



KNOW THE GOAL

Make sure that everyone in the group knows the goal.

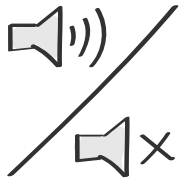
- Write the goal where everyone can see it, such as the chat box.
- Refer to the goal throughout the activity.



KNOW THE NEEDS

Determine what your group will need to reach your goal.

- Refer to the *Roles and Responsibilities* Student Resource for suggestions on what your group may need to reach the goal.
- Make sure everyone knows how they can contribute to reaching the goal.



STEP UP, STEP BACK

Be mindful of your participation in the group.

- Be sure to **step up** and add your ideas and suggestions and **step back** to allow others to contribute their ideas and suggestions.
- Mute yourself when others are talking and use strategies like Pass the Popcorn to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.



BE CREATIVE!

Two heads are better than one! Have fun and be creative.

- Use the skills and talents of all your group members as well as the resources and tools available to you.
- If you are unsure how to do a task online, brainstorm as a group, ask your teacher for ideas, or search the internet for information and ideas.



REFLECT

Reflect on how well your group worked together to reach the goal.

- Did you accomplish your goal?
- What went well and what could have been improved?

Roles *and* Responsibilities

Which of these roles will help your group reach the goal?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Goal Tracker	Who will get group input on the goal and processes and keep the group work on track to reach the goal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderator	Who will make sure that everyone in your group has the opportunity to speak and be heard?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Questioner	Who will ask questions to keep the group on track?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourager	Who will offer words of encouragement to motivate everyone to do their best and participate?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tech Support	Who will troubleshoot any issues involving the use of technology?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Researcher	Who will head up the research, check facts, and cite sources?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Timekeeper	Who will keep the group on task to complete the goal in the time provided?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scribe	Who will take notes and write down necessary information needed to reach the goal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organizer	Who will keep track of the steps and materials necessary to reach the goal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spokesperson	Who will communicate with all group members and the teacher about the group's progress to reach the goal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluator	Who will lead the group in determining if the goal has been accomplished and what next steps may need to be taken.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Artist	Who will lend their artistic talents to help the group reach your goal with flair?