



GENEROUS LEADERSHIP[®] **CHALLENGE**

Unit 2: Seeing Myself as Valuable

Week 5

Considering Our Mental Health

Purpose

Strengthen student well-being and relationships by allowing students to check-in with others about their mental health.

Learning Objective

I can be honest about my current mental health status.

Standards

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions. (CCSS: SL.11-12.1)
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used. (CCSS: SL.11-12.3)

Needed Resources

- Teacher Resource: *Possible Check-In Activities*
- Video: [Students' Mental Health Stories](#)

Session Overview

Open class with Check-In (15-20 min)

"It's become our normal now to prioritize our health and our relationships. This week we are going to be talking about our mind—or our thoughts—and our heart—or our emotions—and how they influence how we see ourselves. Many people put these two parts together and call it 'mental health.' Today we will start with a check-in activity. As always, you are invited to be honest and authentic."

- **Suggested:** Because this week is focused on mental health, it would set the stage well if you checked in on how students are feeling mentally (thoughts and emotions).
 - If you can do this class in person, choose a few questions from the list below and write them on the board. Ask students to write down their responses before you open up for each person to share (watch your time). If you are remote, create a google form and actively read responses as they come in so that you can respond to a student in a timely manner who may be struggling.
 - Feel free to personalize this for your class and students:
 - *How are you feeling today or what are your top 3 emotions right now?*
 - *What's on your mind?*
 - *Is there anyone you are concerned about right now and why?*
 - *What is causing you stress right now?*
 - *How much sleep are you getting?*
 - *How are you taking care of yourself right now?*

Tip: Write students personal notes of encouragement if they expressed they are struggling or find time to connect with one or two students separately to encourage them.

- If you would like to check-in another way, you can choose a check-in activity from the *Possible Check-In Activities* resource.

Share a Video: Students Mental Health Stories (10-20 min)

“Everyone struggles with mental health at different times and seasons of our lives. Sometimes we feel healthy and sometimes we feel as though we are barely making it. Mental health struggles are normal, but our aim is to grow in health. Listening to the stories of others helps us realize that we aren’t alone. We will watch a video now where past Big Idea Project students (the advanced class after GLC) share about their mental health struggles.”

- Play the video: [Student’s Mental Health Stories](#)
- While students are watching, have them write down or reflect on the following questions
 - How did these stories make you feel?
 - Why is it important that these students did this?
 - Why is it so hard to talk about mental health?
- Have students share with a partner.
- Share out to the whole class.

Wrap-Up with a Discussion and Reminder of Lens 1 Goals (10-15 min)

- If you have time, discuss the following questions:
 - Does school address mental health? How?
 - Do you have frustrations about this? Why?
 - What support or actions would help you most?
- Important: Invite students to share out their two goals for the Lens 1 Project and what actions they plan to do this week.
- Consider ending with a guided meditation or breathing activity.

Displacing the Critic in my Mind and Heart

Purpose

Everyone struggles to silence their inner critic, but the critic's voice for today's teens has become particularly heightened due to social media, unhealthy relationships and poor health. Rarely do students hear positive thoughts about themselves, from themselves. This content will help students recognize their inner critic and actively replace the negative voice with positivity and truth.

Learning Objective

I can displace my inner critic to see myself as valuable.

Needed Resources

- Handout: *Engaging with the Critic*
- Week 5 Slides

Recommended Resources to Prepare for this Lesson:

- Video: [Conquer Your Inner Critic](#)
- [Warning Signs of Mental Illness](#)
- Video: [Changing Your Language \(Carol Dweck\)](#)
- [A website all about teen mental health](#)
- [A helpful perspective on what it means to be mentally healthy](#)
- [5 Things Great Leaders Know About Their Emotions](#)

Content Summary

Displacing the Critic in my Mind and Heart

The Critic Voice

Note: We don't always see this as teachers, but each moment of the day students are feeling bombarded with negative voices in their mind: repeated words that were spoken to them from others, or their own voice telling them they aren't good enough. This is an ONGOING inner negative narrative for most students. And it often determines how they show up, what they believe and how they behave.

Standards

- Analyze a complex set of ideas. (CCSS: RI.11-12.1)
- Predict the impact an informational text will have on an audience and justify the prediction. (CCSS: RI.11-12.2)
- Determine how ideas interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text. (CCSS: RI.11-12.2)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases. (CCSS: RI.11-12.4)

Ideas for Customizing Your Content Delivery

- Create a simple video for students to watch based on the content below.
- Direct student to go through the GLC slides for **Displacing the Critic in my Mind and Heart**.
- Hold a live zoom class session to go through content.
- Create a blended option by incorporating slides, video and additional resources as you see fit.
- Create a short quiz to test if students watched or read the content.
- Make a point to tell students that there is an assignment at the end that will serve as their "entry ticket" for the next session together.

- All of us have an inner critical voice in our head that tries to convince us that we aren't all that good or valuable. It's like a small spark of a thought. When we listen to it and agree with it, we feed it. Our inner critical voice can become a wildfire that takes over our entire perception of ourselves, and eventually our perception of others too.
- How can you recognize the critic?
 - The critic is all of the negative voices, influences and experiences in our life put together into one ongoing negative narrative that constantly runs in our mind.
 - It is the voice inside of us that makes us feel like we are less than we are.
 - It craves social approval and fears being outcast. It lurks all over social media, threatening us with fears of being left out or misunderstood. Students refer to this as FOMO (fear of missing out).
 - The critic speaks whenever there is threat of failure of shame.
- It can sound like:
 - “You're too fat.” “I'm a loser; no one likes me.” “I'll always be alone.” “I'll never fit in.” “You'll always be second place.” “You can't do it.” “You'll never be able to make them happy.” “Why try to learn or go to school, I fail every time I try.”
- The voice gets louder and more influential the more we listen to it, to the point where it's all we can hear and we feel trapped in our thoughts and emotions, depressed, and hopeless.
- The critic exists when there is lack of health in both mind and heart.

Where Does the Critic Come From?

- Social Media (Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, VSCO, others)
 - Encourages comparison to others, FOMO, need to be affirmed, online bullying
 - Trains students to crave entertainment and external gratification at the expense of authentic knowledge of self and meaningful communication that builds relationships
- Parents
 - Want what's best for their children, but often their own upbringing, beliefs and brokenness (their own critic) comes out when they parent. This can sound like negative words about identity (watch for always and never words, like “You never...”).
 - Over-pressure their children to perform. This can be behavior management, or most likely for high school students, pressure to perform in academics/grades/tests, sports and other activities.
- School
 - Teaches students through reward and punishment that their grades and test scores are the most important part about them. This makes students feel more like a number than a unique individual valued for who they are (not just what they can or can't do).
 - Teaches students that there is only one right answer and failure is bad.
 - Requires memorization of information as the best way to “win the game.”
- Friends
 - Many teens see relationships as frequent and disposable. It's common to be friends one day and betrayed or move on the next.
 - Students are often in competition with their friends to
 - Get better grades
 - Have the latest tech
 - Wear the newest trend
- Society
 - Through TV shows, advertizing, etc. society throws at young teens a distorted vision of themselves that is never achievable.

- Self
 - We entertain all of the thoughts and emotions of doubt and fear, letting them grow and become the primary soundtrack of our lives. Ultimately we control what voices we let speak.

Your Critic Voice

- Students have learned what the critic sounds like. Can students identify what their critic voice says about them?
 - How about when they're in a fight with a friend or they get a bad grade?
 - What is the reoccurring fear or doubt that won't leave you alone?

The Influence of Emotion

- Question for students to ponder: Is it good advice to follow your heart?
- Emotions are often linked to, and triggered by, memories. Unless we are emotionally healthy and mature, our emotions have a tendency to spin out of control and lead the way we perceive reality and what we do about it.
- Students need specific examples to relate to in order to connect with this concept.
- **Examples:**
 - Your parents say you can't go out with your friends because you didn't do your chores. You immediately feel anger rise in you and in order to 'stick it to your parents' you text your friends that you will be there anyway. You sneak out. Later that night after you get home your parents tell you how much your behavior betrayed their trust. You end up getting into more trouble AND harming your relationship with your parents.
 - **Breaking it down:**
 - First reaction: Anger
 - Next reaction: Revenge
 - Action: Disobeying your parents and sneaking out
 - Result: Broken relationship with your parents, long-term negative impact
 - **What you could have done:**
 - First reaction: Understand and empathize
 - Take a breath and hear what your parents are saying
 - Own your part and ask your parents to reconsider: if you get your chores done in the next hour, can you still go out? Respect their answer either way.
 - Result: Your parents feel respected, your relationship is strengthened, your character grows stronger by doing the right thing, AND you may still get to go out.

Snapshot of Mental Health

- Mental health is "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." - World Health Organization
- In other words: mental health is when someone is functioning at a satisfactory level of psychological (mind) and emotional (heart) capability.
- 50% of mental health issues arise by age 14.
- 1 in 5 young people suffer from a mental illness (an illness that affects the way people think, feel, behave or interact with others).
- Anxiety disorders are the most common and pervasive mental disorders in the U.S.

- **Remember from week 3: What sets those who are mentally healthy apart from those who aren't healthy? How they view themselves and how they deal with stressful situations.**

Signposts that Mental Health is Declining

- Sleep quality and quantity decreases
- Appetite changes
- Mood changes and increased emotional sensitivity
- Social withdrawal, refuse or unable to work well with others
- Overall apathy
- Nervous and anxious
- Actively tear other people down (gossip, bully, judge, criticize, physically hurt)
- The critic voice increases internally, causing a greater dislike for yourself and doubt in your abilities

Your Hero Voice

- Students have learned what the critic sounds like. In contrast to the critic voice exists their hero voice.
 - The hero is the seed already inside of you—not created by external influences or experiences.
 - The hero is your true self, your “original factory setting” before all of life’s circumstances and negative people changed you.
 - The hero is who you were meant to be before the critic caused you to forget, doubt and fear.
 - The hero voice always sounds optimistic, kind, motivated to help people, able to take beneficial risks, solve problems, move forward, believe in yourself.

Displace Your Critic Voice with Your Hero Voice

- How can students replace the lies of their critic voice with the truth of their hero voice?
 1. Be aware of what your critic sounds like (it can be sneaky when it knows you're listening, so pay close attention!)
 2. When you hear it, silence it by saying, “Stop!” or “I am not ____.”
 3. Be aware of what your hero voice sounds like.
 4. Replace the critic by speaking out loud or to yourself what the hero says.
- Examples:
 - “Don't bother trying, you'll just fail” changes to, “If I try and fail along the way it will only make me stronger and bring me closer to my goal. I can do this.”
 - “I am never going to get into college” could change to “I will figure out my next step in life, even if college isn't the right path for me right now.”
- Model this for students if you can.
- It is important for students to understand that when they are aware and choose which voice to believe, they will be able to retrain their brain to see themselves as more valuable, even when they fail or when things didn't go as planned!

Beliefs and Behaviors of the Mentally Healthy

- **Again: what sets those who are mentally healthy apart from those who aren't healthy? How they view themselves and how they deal with stressful situations.**
 - They like themselves.
 - They practice self-care.
 - They accept their mistakes and take responsibility.

- They are optimistic and resilient, seeing mess-ups as opportunities, not set backs.
- They have empathy for others.
- They control their emotions: stress, anger, hate, tension and anxiety.
- They can work alone and with others.

Healthy Leadership

- The hero voice is found in the heart, but only when emotions are healthy and we know how to interpret, manage and apply them well. When we aren't healthy, emotions are almost always poor leaders to follow.
- Some tips for strengthening your heart health and your generous leadership®:
 - Emotions from today should not lead you tomorrow.
 - Realize your emotions distort reality and choose a different perspective.
 - Recognize selfishness; don't let your emotions feed selfish desires.
 - Choose to be present and in the moment.
- *"We desperately need more leaders who are committed to courageous, wholehearted leadership and who are self-aware enough to lead from their hearts, rather than unevolved leaders who lead from hurt and fear." – Brene Brown*

Preparing for Your Socratic

- Explain that students will receive a worksheet to fill out called *Engaging With the Critic*. This will be their preparation for their weekly Socratic discussion.

Displacing the Critic of my Mind and Heart Socratic

Purpose

Create space where students can practice thinking critically about the root beliefs of mental health and where they come from. Hopefully students come to an understanding that they are responsible for their own mental health: how they like themselves, respond to stress, and displace their critic.

Learning Objective

I can explore my personal responsibility for becoming more healthy in mind and heart.

Needed Resources

- Handout: *Socratic Rubric*
- Socratic Discussion Rules Posted

Standards

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions. (CCSS: SL.11-12.1)
- Come to discussions prepared to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. (CCSS: SL.11-12.1a)
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task. (CCSS: SL.11-12.1b)
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view. (CCSS: SL.11-12.1b)

Socratic Discussion Rules (posted for students to see)

1. Students speak and the teacher listens.
2. Follow the Socratic leader who will:
 - Set up the discussion by summarizing context and then pose the question to be discussed.
 - Ensure peers hold to the discussion rules.
 - Keep the discussion on track and flowing.
3. Come prepared.
4. Be concise and do not repeat a point someone already made.
5. Provide evidence and reasoning with your opinion.
6. Listen with an open mind and heart; consider new ideas.
7. Don't raise hands; take turns speaking.

Teacher Tips

1. Require the *Engaging with the Critic* worksheet as an entry ticket.
2. As the teacher it is easy to interject, but allow students to work through silences, disagreements, etc. You may need to guide a little more in the beginning as Socratic Leaders learn to lead.
3. Students can be graded based on the Socratic Rubric for GLC. Share the competency goals before starting the discussion.
4. Review the Socratic rules every time.
5. If needed, allow for small group conversations before starting. (This can help if you have a quiet class, it will help students feel like they have more to say).

Socratic Theme for Week 3

Displacing The Critic

Provide Context

- Summarize the content from the last session about the mind and heart, and the critic and the hero voices. Briefly define what the critic sounds like and how to replace it. Do the same for the hero. The primary difference between the mentally healthy and the unhealthy is how you view yourself and how you respond to stressful situations. Healthy thoughts and emotions allow us to better lead from a whole heart, loving who we are and loving others well.

Possible Questions

- What is the root cause of unhealthy thoughts and emotions?
- What part do you play in your mental health?
- Should we follow our emotions?
- How can we grow to lead from our heart?
- Why is helping others hard when we don't love ourselves first?

Changing Your Recording

Purpose

Provide accountability for students to own and learn from their weekly actions on their Lens 1 Project and the weekly theme: mind and heart health.

Learning Objective

I can reflect on my learning and actions.

Standards

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. (CCSS: W.11-12.3)
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative. (CCSS: W.11-12.3e)
- Use a style guide to follow the conventions of Modern Language Association (MLA)

Needed Resources

- Handout: *Written Reflection Rubric*
- Assignment: *Changing Your Recording Reflection*

Reflection Overview

- Students each week will debrief and apply the week's content through a written reflection
- Communicate to students the guidelines for formatting
 - 12pt; Times New Roman
 - Double Spaced
 - Correct Heading
 - 2 sections: 1-2 Paragraphs per section
- Share the competency goals from the *Written Reflection Rubric*

Reflection Directions and Questions

This assignment has **two** sections submitted on the same paper.

1. Reflect on the actions you took this week toward your two goals for the Lens 1 Project.
 - What did you do this week for your two goals?
 - What is going well?
 - What is not going well?
 - What do you need to change, if anything?
 - What actions will you take next week?
2. What does your critic voice sound like? How are you feeding it so that it doesn't go away? How can you displace your critic with truth and grow a stronger, more healthy mind and heart?

Submit

Week 5

Weekly Deliverables

Deliverables Due This Week:

- Assignment: *Engaging the Critic* (if not turned in yet)
- Assignment: *Changing Your Recording Reflection*

Possible Check-In Activities

Gratitude circle (starting with positivity!)

- On a notecard have students write what they are thankful for that day. "Today I am thankful for _____ because _____."
- In a circle, each student will share what they wrote on their card

Tell Me Something Good

- Have students write down one good thing that has happened to them this week.
- Allow students to share (those who want to).
- Optional: Play "Tell Me Something Good" as students are writing.

Create a mental health check in on a Google Form

- Example Questions:
 - How are you feeling today?
 - Is there anything going on either in or outside of school that you would like me to know that is effecting you personally or effecting school and getting work done for you?
 - Is there anyone that you are concerned about currently and why?
 - Any other questions or comments for me?

How are you on a Scale of 1-10

- Go around the room and have students share how they are doing that day by selecting a number (1 is horrible and 10 is awesome) and also sharing a few words on why. This can be the best way to check-in but it can also take the longest amount of time, so watch the time closely.

Choose one word to describe how you feel

- Post a list of adjectives on the board and ask students to choose a word that describes how they feel right now. Examples: anxious, exhausted, excited, frustrated, angry...
- Go around the room to share.

Personal Notes to Classmates

- This activity will work later in the semester as students get to know each other better.
- At the start of class have students draw classmates' names out of a hat as they come in the room.
- Once everyone has their classmate they will write a positive note to the classmate
 - Encouraging and affirming them
 - Sharing how they are doing
 - Telling them a story
 - More...
- Students will give this note to their classmate.

Write Thank you Notes

- Practice gratitude by having students write someone a note of thanks.
- This could be a teacher, parent, coach, friend, classmate, sibling, etc.

Teacher Resource - Week 5

Breathing exercises

- Students walk into class sometimes with a lot of stress, help them relieve this through breathing.
- Different breathing exercises can be found online or through certain apps on your phone.

Stretching

- Have students stand by their desk, take a deep breath, raise their arms above their heads, hold for a moment, and then deeply exhale through their mouth, releasing their arms back down and releasing tension in their shoulders and back.

Affirmation Circle

- Explain to students what it means to give affirmation. Affirmation is an acknowledgement of a permanent aspect of someone's character.
- Grab a ball or some object to toss around the circle. Tell students to state a classmate's name, affirm their classmate, and then pass the ball to him or her.

Physical Exercises

- Choose some exercises to get the students' up and moving.
 - Jumping Jacks
 - Lunges
 - Push ups
 - Squats
 - Running in place
 - If time: take a walk outside around the building

Mirror in a Box

- Get a deeper box and place a mirror at the bottom.
- Have students sit in a circle.
- Talk up the box
 - "I have something really cool in this box"
 - "What's in this box is extremely special"
 - "When you see what is in the box you will see just how special it is"
- One at a time, students will "look" inside then and pass the box to the next student.
 - Students are not allowed to say what it is, just pass it along
- Students will think it is funny, but the anticipation is key to this activity.
- You are telling them they are special and worthy by seeing themselves in the mirror at the bottom of the box.

Sharing acts of kindness

- Have students share out to the class acts of kindness they did or saw someone do.

Positive/funny videos

- Students are immersed in videos these days and sometimes it is a great way to get kids relaxed and ready for the day
- Suggested Videos
 - [Make Your Bed Change Your Life](#)

Teacher Resource - Week 5

- [A Simple Act of Kindness](#)
- [Inspirational Piano Player](#)
- Find your own

Journaling

- Allow students to write whatever is on their mind for 5-7 min.
- Play quiet music in the background to set the tone.

Engaging with the Critic

1. How does our inner critic form?

2. Why do we listen to our inner critics?

3. What would your day be like if your critic wasn't there and you listened to your inner hero?

4. How do we help others become their own heroes?

5. How are your critic and your mental health related?

Written Reflection Rubric

	Exceeding	Advanced	Proficient	Approaching	Needs Practice
<p>Critical Thinking and Depth of Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly reflects on given prompt Proof of deep thinking and consideration Strongly demonstrates understanding of topic and opinion 					
<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing is clear and uses proper grammar with no errors Follows assignment formatting 					
<p>Prepared and Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turned in on time 					

Reflection: Changing Your Own Recording

Formatting

- 12pt; Times New Roman
- Double Spaced
- Correct Heading
- 2 sections: 1-2 Paragraphs per section

Directions and Prompts

This assignment has two sections submitted on the same paper.

1. Reflect on the actions you took this week toward your two goals for the Lens 1 Project
 - What did you do this week for your two goals?
 - What is going well?
 - What is not going well?
 - What do you need to change, if anything?
 - What actions will you take next week?
2. What does your critic voice sound like? How are you feeding it so that it doesn't go away? How can you displace your critic with truth and grow a stronger, more healthy mind and heart?