

# Caring

This is the first week of our caring unit. Students will focus on self-care and explore the concepts of both physical and mental self-care.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

## Main Lesson

**Whole Class Lesson**  
30 minutes



### 20 Questions

This is the first week of our Caring unit. Students will focus on self-care and explore the concepts of both physical and mental self-care. (See *page 2* for lesson details.)

## Mini Lessons

**For Small Groups**  
15 minutes



### Home vs. School

Divide the class into groups of 6-8. Have each group create a T-chart comparing how they practice self-care at home and school, share it with the class, and make a master list. If necessary do the first several together as a class. Examples include: I practice positive self-talk during tests, I wash my clothes at home, etc.

**For Partners**  
15 minutes



### Improving Self-Care

With your partner, discuss one way you could improve your own self-care. This could be physical, mental, emotional, etc. If there is time, write your answer on an index card to help you remember each day!

**For Individuals**  
15 minutes



### Self-Care Examination

How much time do you spend on you? How much of that time is dedicated to physical appearance and how much is emotional, spiritual, and or/mental? What can you do to increase your self care without focusing too much on what others think of you?

**Technology-Focused**  
15 minutes



### Digital Time Tracker

How much time do you spend interacting with media, TV, music, online, and on your phone? Using the tracker provided take this media inventory to assess your average media use in one week. Share your answers with the class. If time allows, graph the average media use for the week. Set a goal to reduce your usage by 10% this week. (Note: if you do not have access online, track your time with music and TV and establish a goal from that). Link for phone app options:

<https://www.sheknows.com/living/articles/955407/programs-that-limit-your-time-on-social-media>

# 20 Questions

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## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- Buzzer (or other signaling item) for each group
- Pencils
- Index cards

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Explore how they currently demonstrate self-care in both physical and mental ways.
- Create a personal goal for increasing self-care as a part of their daily routine

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the Caring Unit! In this unit we will talk about a number of concepts related to caring: compassion, empathy, and gratitude. Let's begin this unit like we did the Respect unit and look at how we care for ourselves. What does self-care look like for you? Exercise? Planning ahead so you are less stressed? Meditation? Prayer? Time with family and friends? Reading for fun? What does it look like at school? Eating a healthy lunch? Walking with students during a free period? (Does your school have a walking program? If not and this fuels your self-care, maybe you could start one!) Like respect, if students don't see us modeling self-care, they won't do it themselves. So, think about how you can model self-care at school and then set an intention to actually do it. Communicate this intention with students so they know that you are engaging in the practice of self-care just like you will be asking them to engage in self-care.



## Share

3-5 minutes

In this unit, we are moving on to the concept of caring. This word is not unfamiliar to you at this point in your life; you have been caring for yourself and for others for quite some time! For this unit, caring is defined as providing care and showing concern for both ourselves and those around us.

What does self-care mean to you? Invite student responses.



## Inspire

4-6 minutes

Since this topic is not completely brand new to us, we will use this time to discuss the importance of self-talk and how vital it is to our overall health.

As we end our middle school experience and prepare for the transition into high school, it is crucial to understand the role self-talk plays in our overall attitude and life experiences every day. Self-talk might sound awkward when you first hear the term. Do people really “talk” to themselves? The simple answer is YES. Many people are not even aware that their thoughts have an effect on how they feel, act, and go through their daily lives. However, we are actually telling ourselves both positive and negative things all throughout our day! To help you understand what this looks like, let’s explore a common example that often results in self-talk.

Think back to the first time you faced a big fear of yours. Think back to the anxiety you felt. You may have even felt a bit panicked and fearful. Facing fears is a huge challenge, even as an adult. When you have that anxiety and fear built up, your mind will talk to you. The type of self-talk you are generating depends on whether your focus is positive or negative. If you went into that activity with fear and anxiety as the leader of your thoughts, your self-talk was most likely negative: “I can’t do this!”, “This is too scary/difficult for me!”, or, “I might as well give up. I’ll never overcome this fear!” Do any of these conversations to yourself sound a bit familiar? These are all examples of negative self-talk. When we focus on the negative, our brain struggles to find the positive and it changes how we approach things in our day. When we continue to think negatively, our brains actually PHYSICALLY change over time and the negative thoughts become our default. We learn to expect the worst and our self-talk is almost always negative.

Go back to our example of facing a fear you have. Think back to that anxiety and panic you initially felt. When you shift your focus from negative to positive, your self-talk will also change. If you go into this activity with fear, anxiety, AND the energy to overcome these emotions, your self-talk will reflect that: “I will do this, even though it terrifies me!”, “This is very difficult, but I will keep trying!”, and, “I got this far, I might as well keep going!” All of these are examples of positive self-talk in the midst of a difficult situation. Positive self-talk leads to positive interactions within your life, which in turn increases your positive interactions with others when they might have otherwise been negative!

Remember, what you think affects how you feel, which ultimately affects how your day will turn out. You can’t control everything around you, but you can control your thoughts and reactions to those things!



## Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now play a game to practice using self-talk in a variety of situations we face throughout our daily routine. Divide your class into 3 teams. Provide each team with a buzzer, fly swatter, or other item they can use to “buzz in” with the correct answer. Review the rules for the game:

- We will play a version of 20 questions.
- The teacher will ask a question regarding self-talk.
- Your team’s job is to come up with an example of positive self-talk that could be used to answer this question.
- Example: “What can you say if you are about to give a presentation in class and you are nervous?” A potential answer is, “You’ve got this; get up there and rock this presentation!”
- Each person from your team will rotate through and have a chance to be the leader and provide the answer for each question.
- The team to answer the question first gets 3 points.
- If the first team’s answer is not accepted, or they run out of time after buzzing in, the teacher will allow the other two teams to answer. Each answer is then worth 1 point.
- The team with the most points wins! (You do not have to assign points if you have an overly competitive class.)

### 20 Self Talk Questions:

- 1) What can you say to yourself when you wake up late for school?
- 2) What can you say to yourself when you realize you forgot your math homework?
- 3) What can you say to yourself when you get on the bus and your best friend isn’t there?
- 4) What can you say to yourself when you notice a new pimple while you are getting ready for school?
- 5) What can you say to yourself when you are about to give a presentation and you are really nervous?
- 6) What can you say to yourself when you trip in front of the entire lunchroom?
- 7) What can you say to yourself when you are the last one picked in P.E.?
- 8) What can you say to yourself when you get a paper back and it has a lower grade than you expected?
- 9) What can you say to yourself when you are working with a partner that isn’t carrying their weight on the project?
- 10) What can you say to yourself when you notice you are wearing the same shirt as someone else?
- 11) What can you say to yourself when you realize you have no friends at lunch today?
- 12) What can you say to yourself when you run out of time on a test and you didn’t finish all the problems?
- 13) What can you say to yourself when you give an answer to the teacher in front of the class and it is wrong?
- 14) What can you say to yourself when you try to talk to the new guy/girl and they ignore you?
- 15) What can you say to yourself when a bully teases you about your new haircut?
- 16) What can you say to yourself when you are feeling lonely or left out?

- 17) What can you say to yourself when you are not invited to a party that all your friends are going to?
- 18) What can you say to yourself when you get in trouble for something a sibling did?
- 19) What can you say to yourself when you apologize to a friend and they decide not to accept your apology?
- 20) What can you say to yourself when you notice a huge stain on your coat as you get to school?



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

Provide an index card to each person. Have them write 3-5 positive things they can say to themselves every day after they wake up to set the tone for their day. Encourage them to take their card home and tape it up in the bathroom or next to their bed and practice this activity daily each day this week. Positive self-talk is habit forming if you do it daily!