

Thank you for purchasing college-prep materials from DreamCatcher Curriculum, LLC. We appreciate your business and hope that our products meet your needs for assisting students prepare for college. Although our materials can stand alone as a handout for students, the program guide will offer additional information and activities to share with students in a classroom or workshop setting.

The program guide is intended as a rough outline for the topic and can be adapted as you see fit to meet the needs of your program, school, or situation. The guide also includes copy-permissible pages for use in activities as a supplement to instruction. **Please note that color handouts are copyright-protected and duplication in any form is strictly prohibited.** See our website www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com for additional info, resources, and new curriculum topics.

➡ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** This workshop requires minimal prep, however, it is strongly recommended that you read and review the program guide along with the handout before meeting with students.

SUPERHERO KINDNESS OBJECTIVE & INCLUDED TOPICS

To provide middle school through high students strategies for developing empathy and kindness habits which are necessary for a civil society, as well as personal satisfaction, overall health, and success in life; *Developing Empathy, Building Kindness Habits, Fostering Digital Kindness, Becoming an Upstander, Resolving Conflict.*

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP /SESSION

Superhero Kindness is designed as a transitional topic for middle through high school level students. Review the activities on this guide to determine if age-appropriate for delivery to upper level participants. It might be preferable to skip or substitute activities depending on what's best for the maturity level of your group. You will need access to technology to play a few short videos, if time allows, in conjunction with the topic.

STEP ONE TIME: 5 MINUTES

Before providing the handout, introduce the topic of empathy/kindness by sharing the facts below. Read each fact aloud, providing "think time" afterward so students can consider what these facts might represent socially.

In a recent poll, 2/3 of adolescents ranked their own personal happiness as more important than their goodness

The number of high school seniors who value personal wealth has increased steadily since 1965

The number of seniors who believe in the importance of having a "personal life philosophy" has decreased steadily since 1965

59% of teens have been bullied or harassed online

72% of Americans say moral values are "getting worse"

Ask students how they feel about those facts. Questions for processing: *What do these facts have in common? What does it mean for our society that kindness appears to be on the decline? What can you do to impact this social decline?*

DreamCatcher Tip: Depending on the maturity of your group, you might consider screening *Under the Surface*, a short video related to the topic of empathy at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ-pU7ozt3g>. The video is rather heavy in subject matter, but very powerful.

To lighten the mood (and transition to the "superhero" theme), while distributing the handout for Step 2, ask participants to shout-out some common character traits of superheroes. Traits might include: a strong sense of justice, courageous, honest, extraordinary powers, dedication to doing good for others, intelligence, determination, motivation, self-control, etc.

STEP TWO TIME: 10 MINUTES

Read aloud (or ask for a volunteer to read) the introduction box on the cover page that begins with "In a World..." to set the theme for the workshop. Open the handout and read the heading at the top. Ask students to read the first box (*In the Battle of Good vs. Evil*) on their own. Read aloud the next box (*To Defeat a Culture of Cruelty*), pausing afterward to ask: *What types of activities can you do in your community or at school that would provide exposure to people different from you?* Ask if anyone can share what they are currently doing to gain exposure to differences. Emphasize why this is important for college prep, too.

SUPERHERO KINDNESS Program Guide



STEP TWO (CONTINUED)

DreamCatcher Tip: Consider inviting a guest speaker (of a diverse background or having a unique perspective) to share with students about their culture or life experience, impressing why understanding/appreciating differences matters. This would require advanced planning and plenty of time, of course, but the impact could be lasting.

Move to the next box (*Start a Kindness Revolution*) and read aloud down to the KINDness code, which mentions digital or online behavior. Distribute the optional **DreamCatcher Extra** (*Be Kind Online*, provided with this guide) that delves a bit deeper into digital kindness, covering the info as time allows, or simply providing for students to review on their own.

Read the section *Kind it Forward*, allowing time for students to brainstorm and jot down two kind acts they could do for the 2 Kind/2 Week Challenge.

STEP THREE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Take a break from the handout for students to work together in groups to brainstorm acts of kindness. Distribute a copy of the Superhero Kindness 2 Kind/2 Week Challenge sheet (included with this guide) to each student. Put students into smaller groups (see the tip below) and set a timer (or play music softly in the background) for the activity. Instruct groups that they will have 5-7 minutes for brainstorming acts of kindness, using the back side of the Kindness sheet to jot down ideas. In the coming weeks, these activities can be done together or as individual acts, but the challenge should be completed before the next workshop/meeting.

Following the activity, be sure to mention: *Research shows that taking time for reflection after community service is a critical step in developing kind habits. See the section on the sheet about journaling or processing thoughts following your acts of kindness. Be sure to follow through with this step to help develop your "kindness" habit. At the next workshop/meeting, to further process the kindness challenge, discuss and reflect as a group. Questions to ask: How did your 2 Kind/2 Week Challenge go? How many of you completed the challenge? What types of kind deeds did you perform? How did it make you feel to help others? Can you see this becoming a habit for you? Do you have any good stories you can share with us about your experience?* After some discussion remind students that for any habit to form, the behavior must be repeated, usually taking a month or more of regular practice.

DreamCatcher Tip: To quickly determine how many students per group, consider rolling a die to make it fun and easy. If the number rolls to a one, obviously roll again. Two is fine for students to partner-up, then ask the partner groups to find another set of partners for groups of four. Since this workshop addresses inclusion and getting to know new people, suggest to students to find others they haven't previously teamed with or don't know as well. Groups of students, ranging from 3-6 per group, would work fine for this activity.

STEP FOUR TIME: 5-10 MINUTES

Return to handout to cover the section *Empathy Matters*. Start with providing the definition of empathy for students to write in the space provided: ***Empathy is understanding and sharing the feelings of another.***

Read the section about empathy and then cover *Developing Empathy Superpowers* in the next two boxes. To deepen the thought process about moral identity, pause to distribute the *What Is My Personal Mantra/Identifying Core Values* sheet (provided with this guide), that asks participants to consider their core values, personal mantra, and motto. Allow time to complete the sheet or ask that students do this on their own time. A key part of developing empathy is determining what values you hold. This activity needs some level of concentration and consideration (see the tip below).

DreamCatcher Extra: If you have plenty of time available (perhaps splitting the workshop into 2 sessions or with a summer camp activity), students can make a poster representing their personal mantra and motto. This can be done collage-style if you provide the poster board and art materials, or if you have access to computers, students can design their collage with images and fun fonts to print and share. You could make this a longer activity and allow students to express themselves creatively, taking turns sharing their posters and how it represents who they are (and want to become). **Short on time?** Ask students to flip the sheet over to "sketch out" their mantra and motto on the back. Note that doodling/journaling is brain healthy! Brain science shows this activity benefits memory, concentration, and stress relief.

DreamCatcher Tip: During times of concentration in a workshop, consider playing "brain music" at a quiet level. Brain music should have no lyrics, with a slow rhythm of 40-60 beats per minute, such as Baroque classical music. This is a great way to incorporate a sense of mindfulness, plus this kind of music results in a "relaxed alertness" of the brain, producing increased concentration, deeper learning, and improved memory. With a self-reflection activity like this, it would be perfect for concentration.

STEP FIVE TIME: 5-10 MINUTES

Read aloud (or ask a volunteer to read) the last section on the inside of the handout, *Self-Regulation is Your Secret Weapon*. Next you might conduct a short mindfulness activity to demonstrate managing stress and emotions. Guide participants through the following mindful breathing exercises, reading the directions slowly and quietly enhance relaxation.

Find a comfortable sitting position in your chair and sit straight up with your hands placed low on your belly. (Pause)

Relax your muscles in your shoulders. Relax the muscles in your neck. (Pause)

Close your eyes. Focus on taking deep, slow breaths in through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. The exhales should be twice as long as your inhales to maximize relaxation. (Pause)

When your mind starts to wander, which it undoubtedly will, gently tell yourself to think about your breathing. (Pause)

Feel your lungs expand. Feel your belly rise and fall with each breath. (Pause)

Pretend you are smelling a flower then slowly blowing out your birthday candles.

Another mindfulness/meditation breathing exercise you could share is called "Gratitude Breathing." Guide participants through this activity as time permits.

Take a deep breath and count silently the number "one" as you inhale. When you exhale, think of something you are grateful for, like "I'm grateful for my family." Take another breath, this time silently counting the number "two." As you exhale, think of something else you're grateful for, such as "I'm grateful I passed my algebra test this week." Keep breathing, counting, exhaling, and telling yourself things you are grateful for until you get to 5.

Explain to students that stress impairs judgment, impulse control, and compassion instincts. Anxiety makes us oblivious to the feelings of others, increasing our egocentrism and widening the empathy gap. Simply said, when you're less stressed, you're more willing and able to help others. Keeping stress and anxiety down to a minimum is key to kindness!

STEP SIX TIME REMAINING

Move to the back page of the handout to cover *Upstander* strategies. Be sure to leave time in the workshop to review the techniques with students, as these are hands-on effective ways for students to combat bullying and unkind behaviors. You could even have a little role-play utilizing the strategies in dialogue format, like a play, allowing students to come up with their own lines. In connection to being an "upstander," share with students this fact: **85% of students are not the bully/aggressor or the bullied, but are the witnesses to bullying incidents.**

Show the short commercial about bullying at: <https://www.nobully.org/initiative/burger-king/>

Follow up with discussion of which upstander strategies were shown in the clip.

Be sure to cover *Moral Courage* and *Social Skills for Civility*. Read through the Resolving Conflict section at the bottom of the page and solicit examples students can provide of a conflict situation they've experienced and how it might have gone differently if they had used these suggestions for resolving conflict.

LAST STEP

Instead of a paper assessment for this workshop, conduct an informal pre- and post-assessment about the content covered in the session. For example, both before and after the workshop, ask students for a show of hands if they think they could define and explain *empathy* to demonstrate understanding of content. You could count and record the numbers, if desired.

LEARNING OUTCOME

By the end of this session, students will have learned strategies for how to be an "upstander" (rather than a bystander) in the presence of cruel behavior, as well as discovered empathy "superpowers" to develop into habits for fostering kindness. Other topics covered include kindness strategies for in-person and online behavior, conflict resolution, and social skills for civility.



**BE KIND
ONLINE!**

DIGITAL KINDNESS MATTERS!

75% OF COLLEGES
PREVIEW APPLICANTS'
ONLINE BEHAVIOR
BEFORE ACCEPTANCE

70% OF BUSINESSES
USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO
SCREEN CANDIDATES
BEFORE HIRING

BE AN UPSTANDER ONLINE, TOO!

DON'T PERPETUATE HATE

- Report and flag abusive content
- Don't forward or retweet cruel content
- Liking harmful posts is equal to endorsing it
- Don't engage in cyber combat

Being smart doesn't prevent you from saying or doing something stupid online. Your posts can have lasting consequences!

WHO IS THE DIGITAL YOU?

Online is *not* reality. Careful not to "compare & despair" because filtered selfies, altered images, & other deceptions are common.

- What does your online presence say about you as a person?
- You are what you post
- Words and tone matter
- Be interested in others; kindness is contagious!

CAREFUL OF EMPATHY ENEMIES

- TRIBALISM**
- POLARIZATION**
- ALIENATION**
- BIAS**
- HATRED**

When you see these traits online, WATCH OUT! They are the nemesis of empathy and ARCH ENEMIES OF KINDNESS. Tribalism in particular erodes empathy, can make you care less for other human beings, and even take joy in other people's pain.

Try changing the subject or posting complementary comments (balance).

Delete offensive posts, block the offender, & refuse to write anything negative.

Treat people online the same as you would offline.

RETHINK ONLINE SHARING HABITS

- Avoid oversharing or sharing in haste
- Social media is not meant to be your diary
- Don't post sexual content, drinking/drug use, profanity, or irresponsible behavior
- Don't share private info including that of other people; ask before posting photos of others
- Know your audience—family, friends, colleagues, co-workers, supervisors, and even strangers may see your posts
- Don't be intentionally combative if you disagree

Learn to identify fact-based vs. opinion-based content.

AND FINALLY, BOTH ONLINE AND OFF...

Choose your friends wisely. Avoid being with or seeking the approval of others who use bullying or hurtful behavior.



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2 KIND / 2 WEEK

SUPERHERO KINDNESS CHALLENGE

SAY OR DO AT LEAST 2 KIND THINGS FOR OTHERS EVERY DAY FOR 2 WHOLE WEEKS (OR MORE!). EXPECT NOTHING IN RETURN FOR YOUR GOOD DEEDS. SIMPLY BECOME...

A FORCE FOR GOOD!

Add a lightning bolt for the kindnesses you complete over the next 2 weeks!

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- SAY HELLO, SMILE, OR GREET SOMEONE
- WAVE AND SMILE TO 2 NEW PEOPLE EACH DAY
- OPEN THE DOOR FOR SOMEONE
- CONGRATULATE OR HIGH FIVE A DESERVING PERSON
- HUG YOUR MOM, DAD, FAMILY MEMBER, OR GUARDIAN
- READ A BOOK TO YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER (OR ANYONE)
- WRITE A THANK-YOU NOTE TO SOMEONE DESERVING
- ORGANIZE A CANNED FOOD DRIVE*
- GIVE SOMEONE A "HAVE A NICE DAY" STICKY NOTE
- BUY A MEAL FOR A HOMELESS PERSON (OR ANYONE!)
- HELP A YOUNGER SIBLING OR STUDENT WITH HOMEWORK
- BAKE COOKIES AND DELIVER TO SOMEONE NEEDING A SMILE
- LEARN ONE NEW THING ABOUT SOMEONE EVERY DAY
- WRITE A KIND NOTE TO SOMEONE NEEDING ENCOURAGEMENT
- HELP EXPLAIN A CONCEPT TO SOMEONE STRUGGLING IN CLASS
- PARTICIPATE IN A HIGHWAY/ROADSIDE/BEACH/PARK CLEAN-UP
- HELP AROUND THE HOUSE WITHOUT BEING ASKED
- VOLUNTEER AT A NURSING HOME OR HOMELESS SHELTER*
- GIVE AN HONEST COMPLIMENT TO A DIFFERENT PERSON EVERY DAY
- STEP IN WHEN YOU HEAR SOMEONE BEING NEGATIVE AT ANOTHER'S EXPENSE
- DONATE OLD, GENTLY USED BOOKS TO THE LIBRARY OR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
- FIND SOMEONE NEW EACH DAY TO LOOK IN THE EYE AND SAY "GOOD MORNING!"
- INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE NEW STUDENT AT SCHOOL (OR SOMEONE NEW TO YOU)
- SHOVEL SNOW/RAKE LEAVES/MOW THE LAWN FOR AN ELDERLY OR DISABLED NEIGHBOR*
- ASK SOMEONE SITTING ALONE TO EAT WITH YOU OR JOIN YOUR TABLE OR GROUP



EMPATHY IS STRENGTHENED BY SEEING, HEARING, AND PRACTICING KINDNESS!

USE THE BACK SIDE OF THIS SHEET TO BRAINSTORM MORE IDEAS FOR HOW TO BE KIND.

AFTER DOING KIND ACTS OR PARTICIPATING IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE, TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON THE EXPERIENCE BY JOURNALING ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL. CONSIDER THESE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

"How did the person (or people) react to your kindness?"

"How do you think he/she felt about your thoughtful behavior?"

"How did it make you feel to be kind?"

"How would you feel if you were that person?"

"Do you think they'll kind it forward?"

*May require assistance to set up

WHAT IS MY PERSONAL MANTRA?

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO HELP DETERMINE WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU AND WHAT TYPE OF PERSON YOU WANT TO BECOME.

WHAT DO I STAND FOR? _____

HOW WOULD OTHER PEOPLE DESCRIBE ME? _____

WHAT PRINCIPLES DO I STRIVE TO FOLLOW? _____

WHAT DO I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED FOR? _____

HOW DO I WANT TO GIVE BACK TO OTHERS IN MY COMMUNITY?

HOW CAN I MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?

IDENTIFYING MY CORE VALUES

WHAT VALUES MEAN THE MOST TO YOU? (SOME MIGHT CALL THESE VIRTUES.)
CHECK THE YOUR KEY VALUES FROM THE LIST BELOW.

ACCEPTANCE

CHARITABLENESS

EMPATHY

APPRECIATION

CITIZENSHIP

CONSIDERATION

JUSTNESS

FAIRNESS

GENEROSITY

COURTESY

KINDNESS

INTEGRITY

SERVICE

PEACEFULNESS

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

COOPERATION

COURAGE

COMPASSION

GRATITUDE

HELPFULNESS

LEADERSHIP

WHAT IS MY PERSONAL MOTTO?

THIS IS A SHORT PHRASE EXPRESSING YOUR CORE VALUES AND GUIDING BELIEFS.
EXAMPLES: "I STEP UP TO HELP." "I TREAT OTHERS AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED."