

Getting to Know Your Resources

🕒 (Approx. 30 minutes)

Ready?



This activity helps Natural Helpers become familiar with the mental health and support resources available in their school and community. By meeting professionals and practicing referral conversations, students gain confidence in connecting peers to appropriate help.

Note: It is recommended you make arrangements with your school counselor and/or local mental health professional to speak at your Retreat or Ongoing Training session.

- Send the guest a copy of the [Personal Treasure Hunt](#) handout and ask them to use it as a guide to share some personal information for their introduction.
- Connect with the school counselor or professional before they attend your session. Inform them of brief roleplays you will both be doing to model the interaction and common questions that will be asked if seeking their service.
- Display the [Helping 101](#) slide.

Set...

- Natural Helpers will learn the resources available for referrals in their school and community.
- Build comfort for the Natural Helpers to make referrals to an adult.

Go!

1. Welcome the guest speaker and introduce them to the group.
2. Invite the speaker to share their background using the Personal Treasure Hunt as a guide.
3. Facilitate a short roleplay with the guest speaker to model how a student might approach them for help. Use common scenarios or questions.
4. Allow them for students to ask the guest speaker questions about their role, services, and how to access support.
5. Display the Helping 101 slide and review key points about when and how to refer a peer to a trusted adult or professional.

Reflect

1. What did the Natural Helpers learn about the resources available at the school and/or community?
2. Was it helpful to see a referral conversation modeled?
3. What questions do they have about helping a friend connect to support?
4. Why is it important to know who can go to for help?



Limits

🕒 (Approx. 40 minutes)

Ready?



This lesson helps Natural Helpers understand their personal boundaries when supporting peers. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing situations that require professional help and reinforces the referral process. This activity is designed to follow lessons on Referring and Refusal skills and should be complemented by a full suicide prevention training during the year.

Note: This lesson is a review and should be completed after the Referring and Refusal Skills lesson.

- Save a digital copy of the Limits worksheet Limits ([middle school](#) or [high school](#) version). Modify scenarios to fit your school and community.
 - Be sensitive to triggering topics such as death, illness, self-harm, et. Add relevant scenarios from check-ins or known student concerns.
- Make copies of the Limits worksheet for each participant.
- Ensure everyone has a pencil or pen.
- Provide each Leader with sample copies of the [Referral Skills Handout](#) and [Signs of Mental Health Challenges](#).
- Leaders should note any scenarios that require further training.

Set...

- Natural Helpers will identify and express their personal limits when supporting peers.
- Natural Helpers will recognize situations that require immediate referral to a professional resource.
- Natural Helpers will review the Referral Skill, Signs of Mental Health Challenges, and List of Referral Sources documents.

Go!

1. Distribute the Limits worksheet to each participant.
2. Explain that the worksheet contains various scenarios that Natural Helpers may encounter.
3. Ask participants to read each scenario, focusing on recognizing personal boundaries and the importance of seeking professional help.
4. Encourage open discussion about each scenario, focusing on recognizing personal boundaries and the importance of seeking professional help.
5. Refer to the Referral Skill and Signs of Mental Health Challenges documents (linked above) during the discussion.
6. Leaders should facilitate the conversation and note any topics that require additional training or support.

Reflect

1. Which scenarios felt most challenging to respond to?
2. How do you know when a situation is beyond your ability to help?
3. Why is it important to recognize and respect your limits?
4. What steps can you take when you realize a situation requires professional support?
5. How can you support a friend while also referring them to someone who can help?



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Limits Worksheet

Middle School



Handle or Express Your Limits?

Sometimes friends come to you with problems. It's great to support them, but some situations are too big to handle alone. For each situation below, ask yourself:

- Would I keep helping? – Write CH (Continue Helping)
- Would I need help from an adult? – Write L (Limit)

Remember: When unsure, be safe, refer!

1. Jim failed a test and is scared his parents will think he's a failure. ____
2. Faye is crying because her parents are getting divorced. ____
3. Hiroshi wants to join the football team. An older player offered him drugs to help him perform better. ____
4. Sally's boyfriend sent her a nude photo and wants her to send one back. ____
5. Alex drank too much at a party and passed out. You can't wake him up. ____
6. Marvella has been late to school and has bruises and scratches. ____
7. Jenny plans to sneak out to a party even though her parents said no. ____
8. Ching seems down lately. He wants to give you his iPad to thank you for being his friend and says he won't need it anymore. ____
9. Peter took a drug and now won't respond to you. ____
10. Debra thinks her teacher doesn't like her and she'll get a bad grade. ____
11. Pablo's dad died in an accident and he's very upset. ____
12. Sarah keeps falling asleep in class, which is unusual for her. ____
13. Eric is upset with his basketball coach and wants to quit the team. ____
14. Lisa is sad because her boyfriend left her for her best friend. ____
15. You notice Rachel has cuts on her thigh and always wears long sleeves. ____
16. Matt shared with you that he found out one of his friends shoplifts and Matt wants to stop being that person's friend. ____
17. Misty shared a photo of the science test with you and others. ____
18. Joey is being bullied every day after school by a TikTok trend called "table topping." ____
19. Kara says her mom has cancer and is starting treatment. She's scared. ____
20. Gavin had a fight with his parents and wants to run away. ____
21. Peter is shaking and rocking in class. He seems very anxious. ____
22. Winnie says her mom's boyfriend is making sexual advances towards her and she doesn't know what to do. ____



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Limits Worksheet

High School



Handle or Express Your Limits?

Sometimes friends come to you with problems. It's great to support them, but some situations are too big to handle alone. For each situation below, ask yourself:

- Would I keep helping? – Write CH (Continue Helping)
- Would I need help from an adult? – Write L (Limit)

Remember: When unsure, be safe, refer!

1. Jim failed a test and is scared his parents will think he's a failure. ____
2. Faye is crying because her parents are getting divorced. ____
3. Hiroshi is on the football team and feels stressed. He says he's been using drugs to help with endurance and wonders if he can stop after the season. ____
4. Sally's thinking about becoming sexually active and is considering birth control. ____
5. Alex drank too much at a party and passed out. You can't wake him up. ____
6. Marvella has been late to school and has bruises and scratches. She seems different lately. ____
7. Jenny is grounded but plans to sneak out to a party anyway. ____
8. Ching seems down lately. He wants to give you his iPad to thank you for being his friend and says he won't need it anymore. ____
9. Peter took a drug and now won't respond to you. ____
10. Debra thinks her teacher doesn't like her and she'll get a bad grade. ____
11. Pablo's dad died in an accident and he's very upset. ____
12. Sarah keeps falling asleep in class, which is unusual for her. ____
13. Eric is upset he's not playing much on the basketball team and wants to quit. ____
14. Lisa is sad because her boyfriend left her for her best friend. ____
15. You notice Rachel has cuts on her thigh and always wears long sleeves. ____
16. Matt shared with you that he found out one of his friends shoplifts and Matt wants to stop being that person's friend. ____
17. Misty shared a photo of the science test with you and others. ____
18. Roy is nervous about prom night because his girlfriend wants to spend the night together in a hotel. ____
19. Kara says her mom has cancer and is starting treatment. She's scared. ____
20. Richard is panicking because he thinks his girlfriend might be pregnant. ____
21. Peter is shaking and rocking in class. He seems very anxious. ____
22. You see Mike sleeping in his car at school and you think he might have spent the night there. ____
23. Winnie says her mom's boyfriend is making sexual advances towards her and she doesn't know what to do. ____



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Referring Friends

🕒 (Approx. 45 minutes)

Ready?



This lesson helps Natural Helpers understand when and how to refer a friend to a trusted adult or professional. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing signs of mental health challenges and knowing the appropriate resources available at the school, community, and national levels.

- Invite one or more Mental Health Professionals and School Counselors to the retreat to build trust and familiarity.
- Create a customized list of National and local resources such as Suicide Hotline or HearMeWA.
- Prepare copies of the Referral Skill handout.
- Select a few realistic problem situations that require referral and rehearse them with your co-trainer.
- Display the Signs of Mental Health Challenges slide.
- Print copies of the Signs of Mental Health Challenges handout for each participant.

Set...

- Natural Helpers will learn about referral and helpline resources at various levels (school, community, county, state, national).
- Understand when to refer a friend or peer.
- Practice referring friends with significant mental health concerns.

Go!

1. Begin with a brief introduction from the invited mental health professionals and counselors.
2. Display the Signs of Mental Health Challenges slide and distribute the Signs of Mental Health Challenges handout. Review the key indicators.
3. Introduce the Referral Skill handout and walk through the steps.
 - a. Emphasize "When unsure, be safe, refer."
4. Present a few example scenarios and model how to refer a friend using the Referral Skill.
 - a. Participants should know their limits and recognize when a situation is beyond their capabilities. This includes their own physical and emotional safety.
5. Divide participants into pairs or small groups to practice roleplaying referral conversations.
6. Encourage participants to ask questions and reflect on how they felt during the roleplay.

Reflect

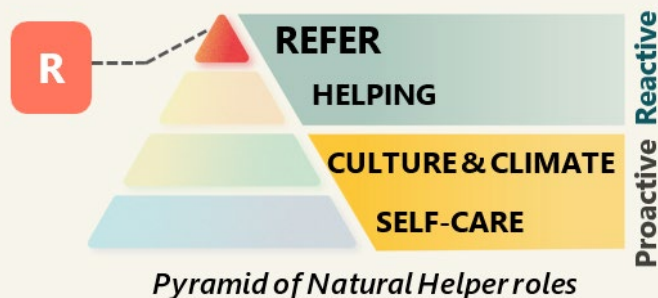
1. What did you learn about referring a friend?
2. What felt challenging or easy during the roleplay?
3. Why is it important to know your limits and refer to a trusted adult?
4. How can you support a friend while also encouraging them to seek professional help?



Referral Skill Handout

Goals of the skill:

- When unsure, be safe, refer.
- When a friend comes to you with a problem that you know should be referred to a helping professional OR if the problem is the limit for you, you make a referral.
- Keep you and your friend safe.
- Support your friend.



Goals of the skill:

- Know your limits, especially in a situation where your friend's emotional or physical safety may be in jeopardy.
- Find an appropriate resource to refer your friend to.
- Convince your friend to seek help from a trusted adult.
- Turn to a trusted adult to receive support for yourself as the helper and/or to make the referral yourself. You may need to refer even though your friend said not to tell anyone.
- Follow up and continue to check in with your friend.

Goals of the skill:

- Make eye contact, say the person's name, state your limit.
 - "(Name), thank you for sharing this with me. I really care about you and am worried for you. I feel we need more support."
 - "This is beyond what I feel comfortable handling myself."
 - "I know someone who can help you with this."
 - "Even though I am referring you to (name of trusted adult), I will still be here for you."
- If they ask you not to tell anyone, say:
 - "I cannot promise to do that because I care about you and am worried for your safety."
 - "I cannot promise to do that because I am worried you or someone else will get hurt. I cannot keep this to myself."



Signs of Mental Health Challenges Handout

In any situation where you believe a person could harm themselves or others, you must refer! The following may be signs of underlying mental health issues:

- Feeling anxious or worried.
- Not attending school.
- Being quieter and more withdrawn than usual.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- Feeling depressed or unhappy.
- Weight or appetite changes.
- Emotional outbursts.
- Feeling guilty or worthless.
- Neglecting their appearance.
- Lack of interest in school and other activities.
- Engaging in high-risk behaviors.
- Use of alcohol or other drugs.
- Bizarre or strange thoughts.
- Giving away possessions.
- Suicidal thoughts.

Some of these signs may not be caused by a serious problem and could instead be a temporary issue. However, if you observe multiple signs or if the signs persist, it is best to see help.

When unsure, refer!



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Communicating Clearly

🕒 (Approx. 30 minutes)

👁️ (Eyes, Ears, Mouth activity)



Pyramid of Natural Helper roles

Ready?

This activity helps Natural Helpers experience the importance of clear communication in a team setting. This activity builds trust, strengthens teamwork, and reinforces the value of listening, interpreting, and expressing instructions clearly.

- One distinct object (e.g. ball or beanbag) per group of three.
- One blindfold per group.
- A flat, open space for movement.

Set...

- Provide Natural Helpers with first-hand experience of the importance of strong communication skills in a team setting.
- Offer a fun and energizing activity that promotes teamwork and relationship-building.

Go!

1. Form groups
 - a. Divide participants into groups of three. Each group should line up front to back with about five feet between groups (Leaders may need to join to complete groups).
2. Assign roles
 - a. EARS (Front): Blindfolded. Their goal is to retrieve the group's object. They may talk but must rely on verbal instructions.
 - b. MOUTH (Middle): Faces the EYES. They relay verbal instructions to the EARS.
 - c. EYES (Back): Faces the field. They can see the gesture but cannot speak. Their job is to guide the MOUTH using hand signals.
3. Demonstrate the setup
 - a. Use one group to model the roles and positioning.



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4. Strategize
 - a. Give groups time to assign roles and plan their
5. Distribute objects
 - a. Blindfold the EARS
 - b. Silently show each EYES participant their group's object and toss it into the field.
 - c. Ensure the EYES acknowledges their object before moving.
6. Begin the activity
 - a. Tell the participants to sit together and watch once they completed the activity.
7. Monitor for safety
 - a. Leaders should stand around the perimeter to ensure participants don't run into obstacles. Allow groups to struggle and learn through the process.

Reflect

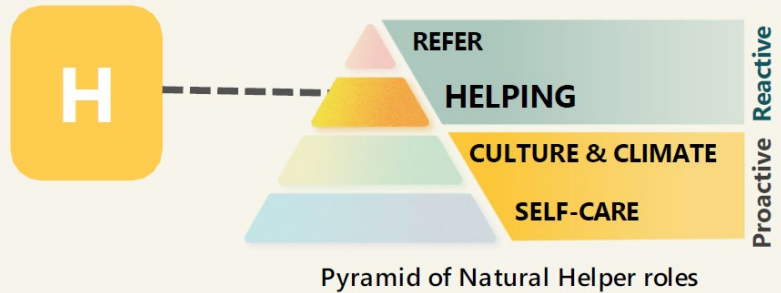
1. If you were the EARS, what was frustrating or helpful?
2. If you were the EYES, what was frustrating or helpful?
3. If you were the MOUTH, what was frustrating or helpful?
4. Why is clear communication important when helping a friend?
5. What strategies can you use to ensure clear communication?
(e.g., eye contact, paraphrasing, asking clarifying questions, removing distractions).
 - a. communication strategy.



Helping Skill Speed Practice

🕒 (Approx. 15 minutes)

Ready?



This activity is a fast-paced review of the Helping Skill, designed to reinforce Natural Helpers' ability to apply the skill in a variety of situations. It is intended for use after participants have completed the full Helping Skill training. Through rapid roleplay, participants will practice listening, responding empathetically, and guiding peers toward appropriate support.

Note: This lesson is a review and should only be used after the group has completed the initial Helping Skill lessons.

- Display the [Helping 101 slide](#) to refresh participants' memory of the Helping Skill steps.
- Prepare several short, realistic scenarios for roleplay that reflect common peer support situations.
- Ensure there is enough space for pairs to practice without distractions.

Set...

- Natural Helpers will demonstrate the Helping Skill in a variety of peer support situations.
- Participants will build confidence in using the skill quickly and effectively.
- Participants will receive feedback from peers and facilitators to improve their approach.



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Go!

1. Divide participants into pairs.
2. Give each pair a scenario card or read a scenario aloud.
3. Assign one person to play the “Helper” and the other to play the “friend in need.”
4. Allow 2–3 minutes for the roleplay.
5. After time is up, have pairs switch roles and repeat with a new scenario.
6. Repeat for 3–4 rounds, rotating partners if time allows
7. Facilitators should circulate, observe, and offer feedback as needed.

Reflect

1. What part of the Helping Skill felt easiest to use?
2. What part was most challenging?
3. How did it feel to be the “friend” in the roleplay?
4. What did you learn from watching or practicing with others?
5. How can you apply this skill in real-life situations?





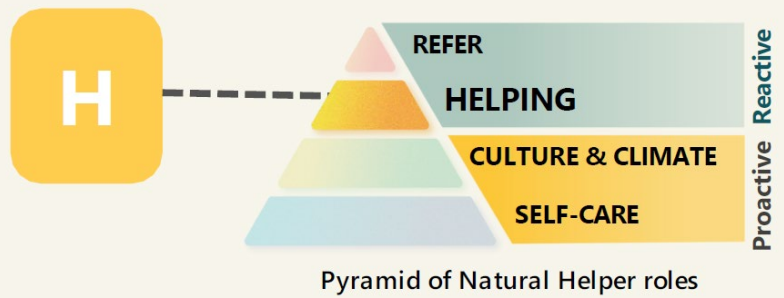
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Hidden Messages

🕒 (Approx. 25 minutes)



Ready?

This activity helps Natural Helpers understand how gossip and secondhand information can become distorted as it spreads. By simulating how messages change when passed from person to person, participants will reflect on the importance of verifying information, avoiding assumptions, and supporting peers in the face of rumors or misinformation.

- Post-It Notes or Note Cards and pens or markers for the leader.
- A Space to divide Natural Helpers into rows of five or six.
- Mini whiteboards, dry-erase markers, and erasers (one set per row).
- Alternative: If whiteboards are unavailable, use paper on a clipboard with writing utensils.

Set...

- Natural Helpers will understand how gossip can distort information and lead to mixed messages.
- Identify what constitutes gossip and recognize that it may not reflect the full truth.
- Develop strategies to support friends when gossip is spread.



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Go!

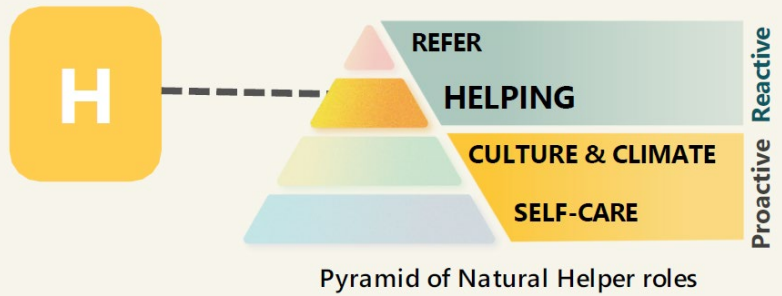
1. Divide participants into rows of five or six people, seated or standing in a line.
2. The leader writes a short message (1–2 sentences) on a Post-It or note card. This message should be neutral or silly (e.g., "the purple elephant danced in the library at noon.")
3. The leader shows the messages to the first person in each row, who reads it silently and memorizes it.
4. That person then whispers the message to the next person in line only once.
5. The message continues down the line, whispered from person to person.
6. The last person in each row writes the message they heard on the mini whiteboard or paper.
7. Each group shares its final message aloud.
8. The Leader reveals the original message and facilitates a brief discussion on how the message changed.

Reflect

1. How did the message change from the original to the final version?
2. What caused the message to change?
3. How does this relate to gossip or rumors in real life?
4. What can you do when you hear gossip about a friend?
5. How can you help stop the spread of misinformation?

Attitude Continuum

🕒 (Approx. 30 minutes)



Ready?

This activity helps Natural Helpers explore and reflect on their personal attitudes toward complex mental health topics. By physically positioning themselves along a continuum from "Agree" to "Disagree," participating engage in respectful dialogue, practice listening to diverse perspectives, and build empathy. This activity encourages critical thinking and helps participants recognize that attitudes are shaped by personal experiences and values.

- Prepare two large signs: one labeled "AGREE" and the other labeled "DISAGREE."
- Post the "AGREE" sign on one side of the room and "DISAGREE" on the opposite side.
- Clear a large open space in the center of the room for participants to move freely.

Set...

- Develop an understanding of the complexity of mental health issues.
- Practice listening to and respecting differing attitudes and opinions.

Go!

1. With participants in the center of the room, explain that you will read a series of statements aloud. After each statement, participants should move to a spot along the continuum that reflects their opinion from AGREE to DISAGREE.
2. Once everyone has chosen a position, invite volunteers to share why they chose their spot. Encourage respectful listening and remind participants that the goal is understanding, not debate.

Examples of statements. You can choose to focus on one topic, read statements from various topics, or create your own.

Family Issues:

- Parents should limit screen time and use parental perspectives.
- Earning an allowance should depend on completing chores and doing them well.
- Families should create written agreements about topics like substance use and relationships.
- It's ok for parents to allow their kids to play violent video games.
- If a teen gets in trouble with the law, parents should let them face the consequences.
- Teens should be responsible for managing their own homework and deadlines.
- It's ok for parents to raise their voice or yell when they're upset.
- If a teen lies, they should lose all privileges for a significant amount of time.
- Teens should pay for their education after high school.
- Teens should tell their parents where they're going and when they'll be back.

Ethical Dilemmas:

- You see someone take food from a store. They look hungry and desperate. You choose not to tell anyone.
- You notice your friend cheating on a test. You don't want to get them in trouble, so you stay quiet.
- You witness a younger student being picked on in the hallway. Even though you're scared, you speak up and try to help.
- A friend tells you they're being physically threatened at home and asks you not to tell anyone. You promise, but later you talk to a trusted adult.
- A friend invites you to a party where there will be drinking. You decide to go, but you don't plan to drink.
- A new student sits alone in the lunchroom. Your friends quietly make fun of them. You decide to leave your group and sit with them.

Reflect

1. What did you notice about your own attitude during this activity?
2. Did anyone's perspective help you think differently?
3. Why is it important to understand and respect different attitudes when helping others?



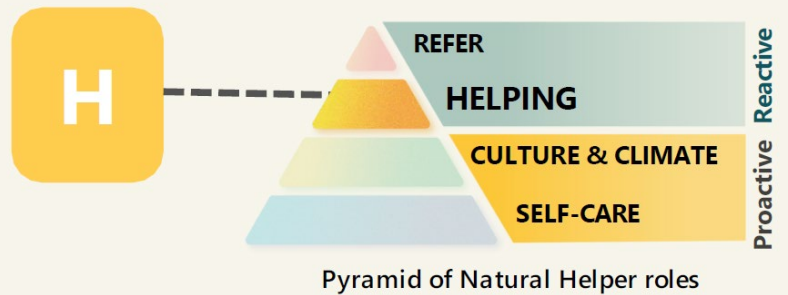
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Recognizing a Problem (Lesson 1)

🕒 (Approx. 40 minutes)



Ready?

This is a lesson in a three-part series designed to build foundational helping skills for Natural Helpers. In this session, participants will explore how to recognize when someone may be experiencing a problem, how to use active listening to support them. This lesson sets the stage for Lesson 2: Introducing Helping and Lesson 3: Practicing Helping.

- Ensure the [Tips for Active Listening slide](#) is ready to display.
- Make copies of the 'Tips for Active Listening' handout for each participant.
- Prepare the Big Bang Theory Active Listening video clip for viewing.
- Confirm that Lessons 2 and 3 will follow this session in sequence.

Set...

- Participants will identify key elements of active listening and demonstrate those elements in practice.
- Participants will recognize the importance of being observant and identify observable behaviors that may indicate mental health concerns.

Go!

1. Begin by asking participants: "What does it mean to be a good listener?" Record responses on chart paper.
2. Distribute the 'Tips for Active Listening' handout and review each tip together.
3. Play the Big Bang Theory Active Listening clip. Ask participants to identify which tips were used or missed in the clip.
4. Discuss how active listening can help us recognize when someone is struggling.
5. Ask: "What are some signs that someone might be having a hard time?" Record responses and add any missing warning signs (e.g. withdrawal, changes in mood, appearance, or behavior).
6. Explain that recognizing a problem is the first step in helping. Let participants know they will learn how to respond in the next lesson.
7. Introduce the observation activity:
 - Ask participants to pair up and face each other and observe their partner without talking for one minute.
 - Once time is up, participants turn their backs to one another and each person is going to make three changes in their appearance (e.g., remove sweater or hat, move watch from left wrist to right). Allow one minute to complete their changes.
 - After one minute, participants face their partner.
 - Ask each person to describe what change they noticed about their partner.
 - Facilitate a discussion on how small changes in behavior or appearance can be clues that someone is struggling.

Introduce the active listening activity:

- Ask participants to form a circle (or two circles if the group is large).
- Whisper the sentence to the first person ("I want to know what it feels like to listen and what it feels like to be heard.").
- Each person whispers what they heard to the next person in the circle.
- The final person says the sentence aloud to the group.
- Facilitate a discussion on how the message changed, what does this say about listening versus hearing, et cetera.



Reflect

1. What does active listening look like in real life?
2. Why is it important to notice changes in someone's behavior?
3. How can being observant help us support our peers?
4. What might keep someone from asking for help, even if they need it?

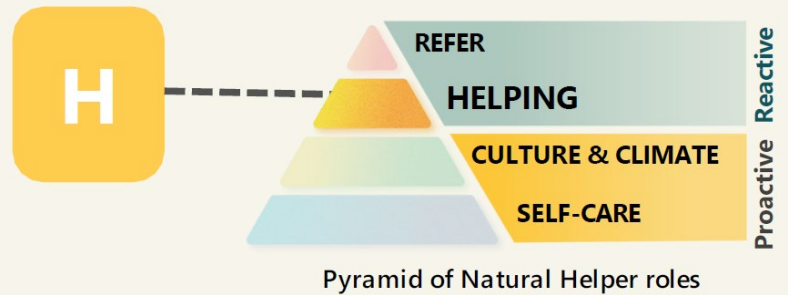


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Tips for Active Listening Handout



Active Listening:

Involves attentively seeking to understand a person's message rather than passively hearing the words that a person says. It can build trust, therefore allowing more open and honest conversations.

Active Listeners:

Provide verbal and nonverbal feedback to show their sincere interest in understanding what the speaker is sharing.

Nonverbal Tips:

- Turn off all devices.
- Make comfortable eye contact.
- Lean in.
- Focus.
- Notice the speaker's nonverbal communication, facial expressions, posture, and hand gestures.
- Smiling and nodding shows you are engaged.

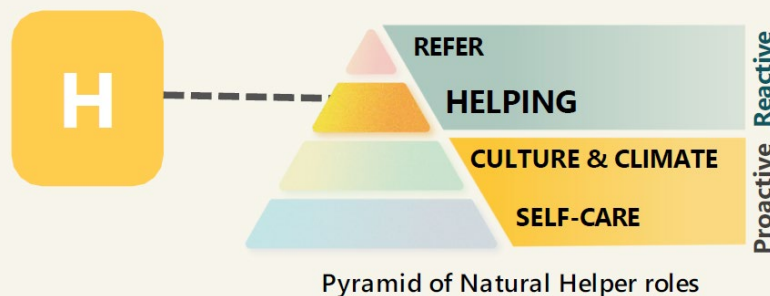
Nonverbal Tips:

- Avoid interrupting.
- Ask open ended questions like "Tell me more about the last time you felt that way," or "What are the main challenges you are dealing with right now?"
- Avoid planning what you are going to say next.
- Listen without judging.
- Paraphrase by restating what the speaker said in your own words.
- Reflect when the speaker is finished to ensure that you understand their thoughts, ideas, and emotions.
- Empathize, which is especially important when talking about an emotional topic.



Introducing Helping 101 (Lesson 2)

🕒 (Approx. 45 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson builds on the foundational skills introduced in Lesson 1. Participants will learn and practice the Helping 101 steps, which provide a structured approach to offering peer support. The goal is to help Natural Helpers feel confident in applying these steps in real-life situations.

- Ensure that Lesson 1: Recognizing a Problem has been completed.
- Select a concern from the survey results that does not require an outside referral for the role-play activity.
- Practice the role-play with co-trainers prior to the retreat.
- Make a copy of the [Helping 101 handout](#) for each participant.

Set...

- Participants will be able to identify and demonstrate the steps in Helping 101.
- Participants will practice using the skill in a variety of different situations.

Go!

1. Begin with a brief review of Lesson 1. Ask the group what they learned about recognizing when someone needs help.
2. Display the Helping 101 slide.
3. Distribute the Helping 101 handout and walk through each step together.
4. Introduce the role-play activity:
 - a. Explain that participants will practice Helping 101 using a realistic concern.
 - b. Share the selected concern from the survey results.
 - c. Emphasize that this concern does not require outside referral.
5. Divide participants into pairs or small groups.
6. Assign roles: one person will play the helper, and the other will play the peer with the concern.
7. Allow time for each pair to practice the Helping 101 steps.
8. Rotate roles so each participant has a chance to be the helper.
9. Circulate and observe, offering guidance and feedback as needed. After role-play, facilitate a group discussion.

Reflect

1. What are the key takeaways from Helping 101?
2. How did practicing the steps help build confidence?
3. What situations might be challenging to navigate using Helping 101?
4. How can Natural Helpers continue to improve their helping skills?

Helping 101 Handout



Goals of Helping 101:

- To help friends work through problems
- To empower friends and be supportive
- To identify and refer friends who need additional help

Before Using Helping 101:

- Plan what you want to say (when possible)
- Decide on a good time and place to talk
- Remember to use your paraphrasing and active listening during the skill

Express Your Concern:

- "I'm concerned"
- "I'm worried about you"
- "You look...you sound..."
- "I heard... I saw..."

Ask Questions and Really Listen:

- "Are you okay?"
- "What's going on?"
- "How are you feeling?"
- "Can you talk about it?"

Explore Alternatives & Consequences:

- "What could you do?"
- "What might happen if you did that?"
- "Could that affect anyone else?"
- "Have you thought about...?"

Develop a Plan:

- Help when possible but know when it is time to refer.
- If you are not comfortable with the situation, or if you see/hear any red flags, you **MUST** refer!
- When referring, share what you know with a trusted adult.

HELP

- "Are you comfortable with any of those options?"
- "What do you think you're going to do?"
- "How can I help?"

OR

REFER

- "We need to talk to someone about this and I know a good person."
- "Let's go now. I can go with you if you want."



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Practicing Helping 101 (Lesson 3)

🕒 (Approx. 45 minutes)

Ready?

This is the third lesson in the Natural Helpers series. In this session, participants will apply the Helping 101 steps in realistic scenarios. The goal is to build confidence and fluency in using helping skills through role-play and peer feedback.

- Ensure that participants have completed Lesson 1 (Recognizing a Problem) and Lesson 2 (Introducing Helping 101).
- Select a concern from the survey results that is appropriate for role-play and does not require referral.
- Practice the role-play scenario with co-trainers before the retreat.

Set...

- Participants will identify and demonstrate the steps in Helping 101.
- Participants will practice using the skill in a variety of different situations.



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Go!

1. Display the Practice Session Scenarios slide.
2. Divide participants into small groups of three.
3. Assign roles within each group: Helper, Person with a Concern, and Observer.
4. Distribute the Helping 101 handout to each participant.
5. Explain the role-play process:
 - a. The person with a CONCERN selects a scenario from the slide
 - b. The HELPER uses the Helping 101 steps to respond.
 - c. The OBSERVER uses the handout to provide feedback.
6. Allow 5–7 minutes for the first round of role-play.
7. After the first round, rotate roles and repeat the process so each participant experiences all three roles.
8. Encourage co-trainers to circulate and support groups as needed.
9. After all three rounds, bring the group back together for a large group debrief.

Reflect

1. What did you notice about how it felt to be the HELPER?
2. What was challenging about using the Helping 101 steps?
3. What feedback did you receive as an OBSERVER?
4. How can you apply these skills in real-life situations?

Asset Bingo

🕒 (Approx. 20 minutes)



Ready?

This activity introduces participants to the concept of Developmental Assets and helps them get to know one another in a fun and interactive way. By engaging in Asset Bingo, participants will begin to recognize the strengths and positive qualities they and others bring to the group.

- Make a copy of the [Asset Bingo handout](#) for each participant.
- Make a copy of the [Developmental Assets List](#) for each participant.
- Have extra pencils or pens available for participants.

Set...

- Introduce Natural Helpers to the concept of Developmental Assets.
- Encourage participants to get better acquainted through interactive play.

Go!

1. Distribute the Asset Bingo handout and a pen or pencil to each participant.
2. Explain that each square on the bingo card contains a statement related to a Developmental Asset.
3. Participants must walk around the room and find someone who matches the description in each square.
4. When participants find a match, have them write that person's name in the square.
5. Each person can only sign one square on another participant's card.
6. Encourage participants to talk to as many people as possible and try to fill in the entire card.
7. After 10–15 minutes, or when someone completes their card, call the group together.
8. Ask for volunteers to share interesting things they learned about others during the activity.
9. Briefly review the Developmental Assets List and highlight how these strengths support healthy development.



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Reflect

1. What did you learn about your peers during this activity?
2. Which Developmental Assets do you see most in yourself?
3. How can recognizing these assets help us support one another?



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Asset Bingo Handout



Has tried to return lost money they found on the street <u>Honesty</u>	Has stood up to the pressure to do something unhealthy <u>Resistance skills</u>	Has done something they were afraid of <u>Courage</u>	Has intervened when someone does something wrong in the neighborhood <u>Neighborhood boundaries</u>	Is good at finding solutions when problems arise <u>Personal power</u>	Rarely feels or felt bored in school <u>School engagement</u>	Often volunteers to serve others <u>Service to others</u>
Spent yesterday evening at home with family <u>Time at home</u>	Has continued pursuing a hobby despite initial failure and hardships <u>Grit</u>	Doesn't necessarily agree with the statement, "If it feels good, do it" <u>Restraint</u>	Has had teachers that encouraged them to do their best <u>High expectations</u>	Learned from a mistake and continued trying <u>Growth mindset</u>	Remembers people's birthdays <u>Interpersonal confidence</u>	Has rules about telling other family members where you are <u>Family boundaries</u>
Is in the middle of a good book (what is it?) <u>Reading for pleasure</u>	Has role models who spend time helping others <u>Adult role models</u>	Considers themselves an optimist (why?) <u>Positive view of personal future</u>	Eats dinner with family most evenings <u>Family support</u>	Has been laughed at for taking an unpopular stand on an issue <u>Integrity</u>	Has a regular family meeting at home <u>Positive family communication</u>	Knows a good joke (what is it?) <u>Humor</u>
Can't think of anyone they would rather be <u>Self-esteem</u>	Works hard to do best at school or work <u>Achievement motivation</u>	Has risen to a challenge because of encouragement from friends <u>Positive peer influence</u>	F R E E	Participated in religious activities during the past week <u>Religious community</u>	Has made a major life choice because of a sense of purpose <u>Sense of purpose</u>	Points out younger kids' strengths and contributions <u>Community values youth</u>
Gets 8 hours of sleep most nights and views it as a priority <u>Sleep</u>	Knows the school policy on violence/bullying <u>School boundaries</u>	Remembers an adult who really influenced their life (how?) <u>Other adult relationship</u>	Enjoys taking hikes or going to national parks <u>Nature</u>	Volunteers (or their parents volunteer) in a school <u>Parent involvement in school</u>	Participates in an extracurricular activity, sport, or club at school <u>Bonding to school</u>	Knows names of at least 10 neighbors <u>Caring neighborhood</u>
Participates or volunteers in a community youth program <u>Youth programs</u>	Has worked hard to meet a commitment that wasn't enjoyable <u>Responsibility</u>	Turns in most, if not all, of their homework on time <u>Homework</u>	Does something unique to keep safe <u>Safety</u>	Is fluent in two or more languages <u>Cultural competence</u>	Cares for a pet that makes life better (what kind?) <u>Pets</u>	Enjoys planning big projects <u>Planning & decision making</u>
Did or does something to make a school more friendly <u>Caring school climate</u>	Has training in conflict resolution <u>Peaceful conflict resolution</u>	Listens to music often as a way to relax and change moods <u>Music</u>	Has been in a protest march to address a social issue or concern <u>Equality & justice</u>	Has received good advice from someone younger than them <u>Youth as resources</u>	Plays a musical instrument (which one?) <u>Creative activities</u>	Gives money to help with famine or disaster relief <u>Caring</u>



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Developmental Assets List

External Assets



Support:

- Family support: *Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- Positive family communication: *Young person and their parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
- Other adult relationships: *Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.
- Caring neighborhood: *Young person experiences caring neighbors.
- Caring school climate: *School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
- Parent involvement in schooling: *Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.



Empowerment:

- Community values of youth: *Young people perceive that adults in the community value youth.
- Youth as resources: *Young people are given useful roles in the community.
- Service to others: *Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
- Safety: *Young person feels at home, school, and in the neighborhood.



Boundaries and Expectations:

- Family boundaries: *Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
- School boundaries: *School provides clear rules and consequences.
- Neighborhood boundaries: *Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young peoples' behavior.
- Adult role models: *Parent(s) and other adults' model positive, responsible behavior.
- Positive peer influence: *Young person's best friends' model responsible behavior.
- High expectations: *Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.



Constructive Use of Time:

- Creative Activities: *Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
- Youth Programs: *Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
- Religious Community: *Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
- Time at Home: *Young person is out with friends with nothing special to do two or fewer nights per week.

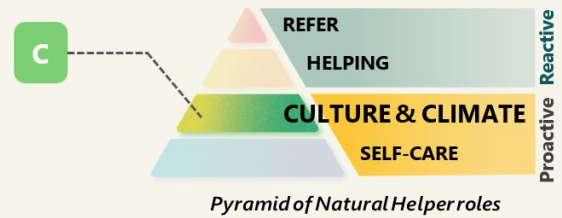


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Developmental Assets List



Physical Health:

- Adequate Sleep: **Young person gets enough sleep to feel rested and alert throughout the day.
- Exercise: **Young person gets regular daily exercise to achieve strength and stamina and maintain a healthy weight.
- Proper Nutrition: **Young person develops balanced, healthy eating habits that provide them with the fuel they need to develop and maintain a healthy weight.
- Exposure to Nature: **Young person appreciates and works to preserve the natural environment and seeks out opportunities to be in natural settings.
- Access to Medical Care, Dental Care, and Immunizations: **Young person has routine access to medical and dental services.
- Animals and Pets: **Young person appreciates and seeks opportunities to interact with animals to enhance their mental health.
- Listening to Music: **Young person appreciates music and its power to enhance their well-being.

Internal Assets



Commitment to Learning:

- Achievement Motivation: *Young person is motivated to do well in school.
- School Engagement: *Young person is actively engaged in learning.
- Homework: *Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
- Bonding to School: *Young person cares about their school.
- Reading for Pleasure: *Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.



Positive Values:

- Caring: *Young person places a high value on helping other people.
- Equality and Social Justice: *Young person places a high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- Integrity: *Young person acts on convictions and stands up for their beliefs.
- Honesty: *Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
- Responsibility: *Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- Restraint: **Young person believes it is important to not use alcohol or other drugs.
- Courage: **Young person can face things that frighten them.
- Fairness: **Young person is impartial and just in dealing with others.
- Respect: **Young person has high regards for the feelings, wishes, and rights of others.



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Developmental Assets List

Positive Identity:

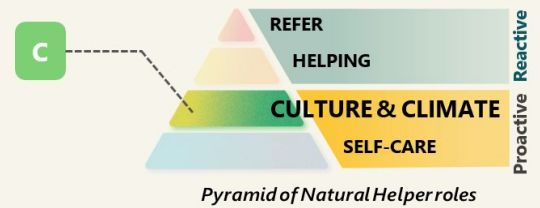
- Personal Power: *Young person feels they have control over "things that happen to me."
- Self-Esteem: *Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- Sense of Purpose: *Young person reports that "my life has purpose."
- Positive View of Personal Future: *Young person is optimistic about their personal future.

Social Competencies:

- Making and Keeping Friends: **Young person knows how to approach new people and develop relationships that last.
- Acceptance and Tolerance: **Young person values and respects differences in others and embraces diversity.
- Social Awareness: **Young person understands the perspectives and feelings of others in social settings.
- Social Advocacy: **Young person actively promotes and supports causes that contribute to the well-being of their community and society.
- Planning and Decision Making: *Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- Interpersonal Competence: *Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- Cultural Competence: *Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Resistance Skills: *Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- Peaceful Conflict Resolution: *Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Emotional Competencies:

- Emotional Awareness: **Young person is aware of and can identify their own emotions and the emotions of others.
- Sympathy and Empathy: **Young person shows understanding and compassion for others' feelings and experiences.
- Grit and Perseverance: **Young person has strength or character in challenging and unpleasant situations.
- Anger Management and Self Control: **Young person can handle situations productively that make them angry.
- Self-Awareness and Self Reliance: **Young person has a clear understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses can depend on themselves in challenging situations.
- Self-Management: **Young person effectively manages their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations.
- Growth Mindset: **Young person believes that they can develop skills and abilities through continuous hard work.
- Sense of Humor: **Young person can recognize and appreciate things that are funny and laugh at themselves.



*New Developmental Asset, Copyright 2018 by Roberts & Associates

**Original Developmental Asset, Copyright 2011 by Search Institute



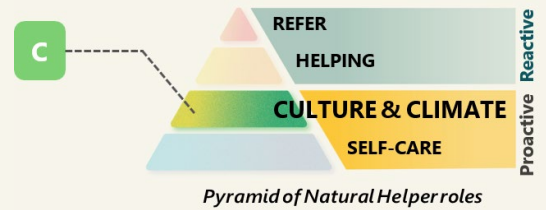
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Asset Jenga

🕒 (Approx. 20 minutes)



Ready?

This interactive activity helps participants understand the importance of building developmental assets in themselves and others. It also illustrates the need for early intervention and teamwork when supporting friends who may be struggling.

- Purchase a set of giant Jenga blocks.
- Write one Developmental Asset on each block.
- Set up the tower of the blocks in the center of the room.

Set...

- Recognize the need to build assets with their friends and in themselves.
- Illustrate the importance of early intervention with friends who are struggling.
- Understand the value of teamwork in supporting peers.

Go!

1. Gather participants around the Jenga tower.
2. Explain that each block represents a Developmental Asset that contributes to a person's well-being.
3. Invite participants to take turns removing a block from the tower.
4. After removing a block, the participant reads the asset aloud and shares how that asset can help someone who is struggling.
5. Continue until the tower becomes unstable or collapses.
6. Facilitate a discussion on who removing assets can weaken a person's foundation and stability.
7. Rebuild the tower together, discussing how adding assets strengthens individuals and communities.

Reflect

1. What did you notice as the tower became unstable?
2. How do Developmental Assets support a person's mental health?
3. What can you do to help build assets in yourself and your friends?
4. How does teamwork play a role in supporting others?



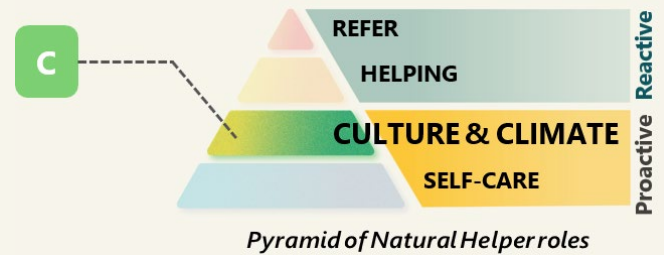
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Cross the Line

🕒 (Approx. 30 minutes)



Ready?

This activity is designed to foster empathy, build trust, and strengthen connections among Natural Helpers. By participating in a shared experience, students and staff will gain insight into each other's lives and develop deeper bonds.

- Ensure the activity is conducted in a large, open room that can comfortably accommodate your group.
- Use masking tape to create a long line across one side of the room. This will serve as the 'line' participants will cross during the activity.

Set...

- Recognize the need to build assets with their friends and in themselves.
- Illustrate the importance of early intervention with friends who are struggling.
- Understand the value of teamwork in supporting peers.

Go!

1. Ask all participants to stand on one side of the masking tape line.
2. Explain the rules:
 - a. You will read a series of statements. If the statement applies to them, they should silently cross the line, pause and look who crossed the line and who did not, reflect, and then return to their original position.
 - b. Emphasize that this is a silent activity. There should be no talking or commenting during the exercise.
3. Read the following statements or add your own:
 - a. Cross the line if you have ever felt left out.
 - b. Cross the line if you have ever helped a friend through a tough time.
 - c. Cross the line if you've ever felt overwhelmed by school or life.
 - d. Cross the line if you've ever felt proud of yourself.
 - e. Cross the line if you've ever wished someone would ask how you're doing.
 - f. Cross the line if you have stood by or watched someone being picked on and said nothing.
 - g. Cross the line if you have ever been made fun of by a teacher or a student in class.
4. Continue with a variety of statements that encourage reflection and empathy.
5. After all statements have been read, invite participants to sit in a circle for a group reflection.

Reflect

1. What did you notice during the activity?
2. How did it feel to cross the line?
3. How did it feel to see others cross the line?
4. What did this activity teach you about your peers?
5. How can we use what we learned today to support each other better?





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Labeling

🕒 (Approx. 40 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson helps participants explore the impact of labeling and stereotyping. Through a role play activity, students will reflect on how assumptions and labels affect relationships and group dynamics. The goal is to foster empathy and reduce labeling.

- Print eight headband labels and attach them to baseball style hats or elastic headbands.
- Select four staff members and four students willing to role-play in front of the larger group.
- Arrange eight chairs in a horseshoe formation at the front of the room.
- Ensure non-role-playing students are seated facing the panel.

NOTE: Do NOT place any negative labels on students' heads; those labels should be placed on the adult panelists' head. Also, do NOT place labels on the students' head that may reinforce an existing stereotype.

Set...

- Identify the harmful effects of labeling and stereotyping.
- Reduce labeling and stereotyping.



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Go!

1. Invite the eight selected participants to the front of the room and have them sit in the arranged chairs.
2. Without letting them see the headbands, place a label on each participant.
3. Instruct the rest of the group to interact with the panel as if the labels were true, without explicitly stating the labels.
4. Ask the panelists to role-play a discussion (e.g., students are proposing a change with the principal, such as being able to leave campus for lunch) for approximately 5–7 minutes. Encourage natural conversation and engagement.
5. After the activity, ask the panelists to guess what their labels were based on how they were treated.
6. Reveal the actual label and facilitate a discussion on how it felt to be treated based on assumptions.
7. Ask the audience how it felt to treat someone based on a label and whether it influenced their behavior.
8. Emphasize how labeling can affect relationships, self-esteem, and group dynamics.

Reflect

1. What did you notice about how people were treated based on their labels?
2. How did it feel to be labeled or to label someone else?
3. How can we be more mindful of the assumptions we make about others?
4. What can we do to reduce labeling and stereotyping in our school community?

Suggested labels to create:

- Bully (fear me).
- Class Clown (laugh at me).
- Tech Whiz (ask me for help).
- Athlete (cheer for me).
- Know-It All (challenge me).
- Overachiever (be impressed by me).
- Teacher's Pet (be annoyed by me).
- Quiet Kid (don't talk to me).

My Personal Business Card

⌚ (Approx. 20 minutes)

Ready?

This activity helps participants get to know each other and feel more comfortable in the group. Each participant will create a personal “business card” to share something unique about themselves.

- Provide each participant with a 3x5 note card and a pen or pencil.
- Display the My Personal Business Card slide.

Set...

- Help Natural Helpers get to know each other and build comfort within the group.
- Let participants know they will be creating a personal business card that reflects who they are.

Go!

Begin by explaining that one of the goals of Natural Helpers is to improve the culture and climate of school by creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. Acknowledge that the participants all have a common and shared quality among them: they are trusted by their respective peers.

1. Display the ‘My Personal Business Card’ slide to guide participants.
2. Distribute the 3x5 cards and pens or pencils.
3. Instruct participants to include the following on their card:
 - a. Their name (center).
 - b. Their favorite food (upper left corner).
 - c. Their favorite school subject (upper right corner).
 - d. A personal motto or quote they live by (lower left corner).
 - e. One fun fact or hobby (lower right corner).
4. Allow 5–7 minutes for participants to complete their cards.
5. Once everyone is finished, invite participants to share their cards with the group or with a partner.



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Reflect

1. What did you learn about someone that surprised you?
2. How did it feel to share something personal with the group?
3. Why is it important to recognize and celebrate our individual strengths?



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Personal Treasure Hunt

⌚ (Approx. 20 minutes)



Ready?

This activity helps participants learn more about their Natural Helper teammates and build stronger connections. By engaging in a fun and interactive treasure hunt, participants will discover shared interests, unique experiences, and personal strengths among their peers.

- Make a copy of the [Personal Treasure Hunt handout](#) for each participant.
- Ensure there are pens or pencils available for everyone.
- Prepare a timer or stopwatch to manage activity time.

Set...

- Participants will get to know each other better and strengthen team bonds.



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Go!

Begin by acknowledging that the participants may have more in common than they think. This activity is designed to help participants find out what they have in common with each other, as well as how they are different.

1. Distribute the Personal Treasure Hunt handout and a pen or pencil to each participant.
 - a. Explain the instructions:
 - i. Each box on the handout contains a prompt (e.g., "Find someone who has traveled to another country.")
 - ii. Participants must walk around the room and talk to others to find someone who matches each prompt.
 - iii. When they find a match, they write that person's name in the corresponding box.
2. Set a timer for 10–12 minutes and encourage participants to interact with as many teammates as possible.
3. After time is up, invite participants to return to their seats.

Reflect

1. What did you learn about your teammates that you didn't know before?
2. How can knowing more about each other help us work better as a team?
3. Why is it important to build connections with others in a helping role?

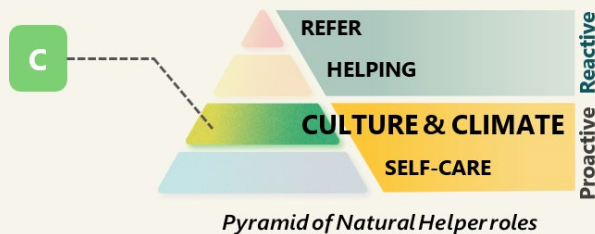


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Personal Treasure Hunt Handout



This is an opportunity to connect with everyone here! Find someone in the group who matches each of the descriptions below - one person per description. Ask them to sign their name on the line next to the description that fits them. Have fun!

1. Someone who was born in a different state than you _____
2. Someone who has met somebody famous (who?) _____
3. Someone who shares a birthday month with you _____
4. Someone with the same color eyes as you _____
5. Someone who has attended a concert (which one?) _____
6. Someone who has 4 or more siblings _____
7. Someone who feels it's okay to cry _____
8. Someone who has a pet (what kind?) _____
9. Someone who spends fewer than 8 hours per week on screens _____
10. Someone whose first name is more than 7 letters _____
11. Someone who has lived outside the state _____
12. Someone who plays a sport (what sport?) _____
13. Someone who has the same favorite dessert as you _____
14. Someone who likes to exercise _____
15. Someone who wears contact lenses _____
16. Someone who wants to write a book (about what?) _____
17. Someone who can speak multiple languages (which ones?) _____
18. Someone who likes to cook _____
19. Someone who is the youngest family member _____
20. Someone who likes brussels sprouts _____
21. Someone who can recite the alphabet backwards _____
22. Someone who doesn't have a middle name or has two _____
23. Someone who is left-handed _____
24. Someone who has read all the Harry Potter books _____
25. Someone who has run a marathon or half-marathon _____



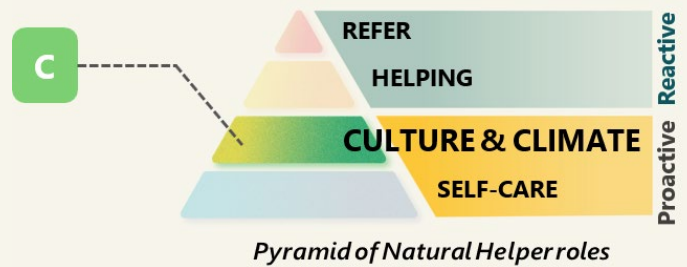
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Random Acts of Asset Building

🕒 (Approx. 20 minutes)



Ready?

This activity encourages participants to engage in intentional, positive actions that build developmental assets in others. By practicing random acts of asset building, Natural Helpers learn how small gestures can have a meaningful impact on school climate and peer relationships.

- Make copies of the [Random Acts of Asset Building handout](#) for each participant.

Set...

- Participants will recognize and reinforce positive qualities in others by asset building.
- Participants will practice giving and receiving random acts of asset building.

Go!

1. Distribute the Random Acts of Asset Building handout to each participant.
2. Explain the purpose of the activity: to practice giving compliments, encouragement, and recognition to others in the group.
3. Ask participants to walk around the room and write positive messages or compliments on each other's handouts or sticky notes.
4. Encourage participants to focus on specific assets such as kindness, leadership, honesty, or helpfulness.
5. Allow 10–12 minutes for participants to circulate and write messages.
6. After the writing period, ask participants to return to their seats and read the messages they received.
7. Facilitate a brief discussion on how it felt to receive positive feedback and how these acts can improve school climate.



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Reflect

- 1.What did you learn about the power of positive feedback?
- 2.How did it feel to receive a random act of asset building?
- 3.How can you continue this practice in your daily school life?



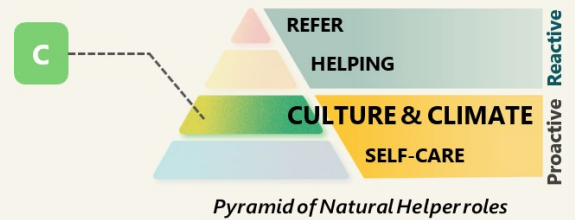
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Random Acts of Asset Building Handout

Name _____



1. Take care of yourself first, so you can take care of others.
2. Give a compliment to someone you don't know.
3. Admit when you're wrong.
4. Don't help spread rumors.
5. Stand up for your friends.
6. Give others a second chance when they make a mistake.
7. Consider both sides of the story.
8. Learn and remember the names of new people you meet.
9. Smile.
10. Follow through on your commitments.
11. Don't talk about others behind their backs.
12. Accept that people change.
13. Be patient with others.
14. Acknowledge peers and staff when you see them.
15. Say "thank you."
16. Don't expect perfection.
17. Really listen to what others have to say.
18. Make time to hang out with friends you don't see as often.
19. Be yourself around others.
20. Tell jokes.
21. Ask others for their opinions.
22. Put yourself in someone else's shoes.
23. Notice when friends are upset and ask "what's wrong?"
24. Apologize where it is due.
25. Spend time by yourself when needed.
26. Show up to your friends' sports or extracurricular events.
27. Go the extra mile.
28. Ask for help when you need it.
29. Be a team player.
30. Be excited for your friends and what they have to say.



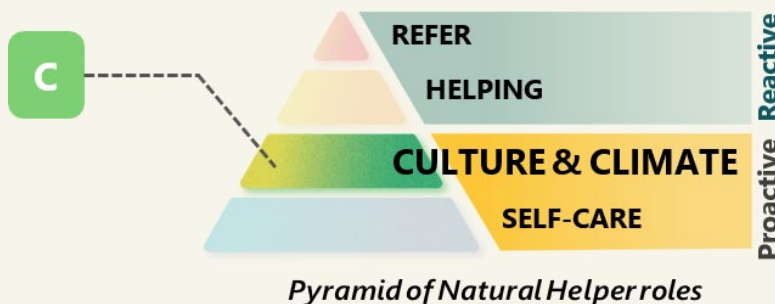
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Sharing

⌚ (Approx. 60-90 minutes)



Ready?

This activity fosters deeper connections among Natural Helpers by encouraging personal sharing. Participants will reflect on the people who have helped them in their lives and build empathy and trust within the group. This session is designed to strengthen bonds and promote emotional support among teammates.

NOTE: This has been a powerful and positive activity over the years across numerous Natural Helper retreats. However, be aware that in a few instances students have shared information that required adult staff members to report to the appropriate authorities. You may want to let students know that adult staff members are mandatory reporters in advance. Ensure your adult teammates are prepared to support students if they are in need of emotional support after sharing.

- Find a room for sharing that is comfortable and removed from distractions.
- Ask all adult participants to sit among students during Sharing and to monitor students, notifying the training team if they have concerns about individuals.
- Designate a team to follow up with anyone who appears to need support.
- Select an object for participants to hold as they share (e.g. a soft ball or a talking stick). Only one person holding the object may speak.
- Recommended: have a playlist and a speaker available to play calming music to begin the session.

Set...

- Participants will develop bonds and increase understanding among their Natural Helper team members.
- Participants will get to know each other on a more personal level than they know each other at school.



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1. Begin with calming music to set the tone for the session.
2. Explain the purpose of the activity: to share stories about people who have helped us and to build empathy within the group.
3. Remind participants that this is a confidential sharing activity. What is shared in the room stays in the room, unless it involves safety concerns.
4. Let students know that adult staff members are mandatory reporters and may need to follow up if safety concerns arise.
5. Introduce the sharing object and explain that only the person holding it may speak.
6. Ask participants to think about someone who has helped them in their life and how that person made a difference.
7. Begin the sharing circle with the trainer going first to model vulnerability and set the tone.
8. Pass the object around the circle. Each participant can share their story when they receive the object. Participants are allowed to pass.
9. Allow approximately two minutes per participant to share.
10. Monitor the group for emotional responses. Adult staff should be ready to support students as needed.
11. After everyone has had a chance to share, thank the group for their openness and vulnerability.

Reflect

1. What did you learn about your teammates through this activity?
2. How did it feel to share your story or listen to others?
3. Why is it important to recognize the helpers in our lives?
4. How can we be better helpers to others in our school community?

Self-Care Kit — Affirmations

🕒 (Approx. 15 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson is designed to help participants build a personalized Self-Care Kit, beginning with the practice of positive self-talk. The goal is to encourage students to develop habits that support their mental and emotional well-being. By focusing on affirmations, students learn to counter negative self-talk and reinforce a positive mindset.

- Make a copy of the [Positive Affirmations handout](#) for each participant.
- Have multiple sets of different color Post-It Notes.
- Provide crayons, markers, or pens for participants.

Set...

- To provide participants with a strategy to combat negative self-talk and to help them achieve their goals.
- To give participants a strategy to improve their mental health.



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Go!

Explain to participants that they will be building a Self-Care Kit for themselves. The first item in their kit is positive self-talk.

1. Distribute the Positive Affirmations handout.
 - a. Define affirmations as encouraging statements that promote a positive mindset.
2. Ask participants to choose one affirmation that could improve how they speak to themselves.
 - a. Encourage them to select an affirmation that counters a negative thought or feeling.
3. Instruct participants to write the affirmation on a Post-It Note using present tense (e.g., "I only compare myself to myself"). Keep the affirmation short.
4. Instruct participants to write the same affirmation on two additional Post-It Notes.
5. Explain three strategies that help make affirmations effective.
 - a. Daily repetition: writing in present tense reinforces the message.
 - b. Visual reminders: Place a note somewhere visible in the morning (bathroom mirror), place the second note in a spot they'll see throughout the day (backpack, phone wallpaper), and place the third note where they'll see it before bed (bedside table).
 - c. Social accountability: pair up with a friend or small group to share affirmations and check-in with friends about their daily affirmation.
6. Ensure every participant has someone to share their affirmation with.
7. Reinforce the importance of community and accountability in personal growth.

Reflect

1. Invite participants to reflect on how it felt to choose and share an affirmation.
2. Encourage open discussion and affirm the importance of self-kindness and peer encouragement.



Positive Affirmations



1. There is no one better to be than myself.
2. My challenges help me grow.
3. I have courage and confidence.
4. I can control my own happiness.
5. I have people who love and respect me.
6. I stand up for what I believe in.
7. It's okay not to know everything.
8. I can do better next time.
9. I believe in myself.
10. I am enough.
11. I give myself permission to make mistakes.
12. I strive to do my best every day.
13. I've got this.
14. I can take it one step at a time.
15. I am proud of myself.
16. I am free to make my own choices.
17. I deserve to be loved.
18. I can make a difference.
19. I am in charge of my life.
20. I matter.
21. My confidence grows when I step outside my comfort zone.
22. If I fall, I will get back up again.
23. I only compare myself to myself.
24. It is enough to do my best.
25. I am going to get through this.
26. I am working on myself.
27. I'm prepared to succeed.
28. My voice matters.
29. I choose my own attitude.
30. I am becoming the best version of myself.



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Self-Care Kit — Circles of Support

🕒 (Approx. 30 minutes)

Ready?

This lesson helps participants identify and reflect on the people in their lives who provide support, encouragement, and guidance. By mapping out their personal support network, participants gain a clearer understanding of who they can turn to in times of need, and how to strengthen those connections. The goal is to promote emotional well-being and resilience through community and trusted relationships.

- Print copies of the [Circles of Support](#) and [People I Trust](#) handout for each participant.
- Ensure pens or pencils are available.
- Arrange seating to allow for small group or partner discussions.

Set...

- Participants will identify individuals in their lives who provide emotional, social, and practical support.
- Participants will understand the importance of having a support system.
- Participants will learn how to strengthen and maintain supportive connections.



Go!

Part I: Circles of Support

1. Begin by explaining the concept of a support circle: a group of people who offer help, encouragement, and care.
2. Distribute the Circles of Support handout.
3. Ask participants to write their name in the center circle.
4. In the surrounding circles, have them write the names of people who support them. These can include family members, friends, teachers, coaches, mentors, or community members.
5. Encourage them to think broadly and include individuals who support them emotionally, socially, or practically.
6. Allow time for participants to complete their handouts.
7. Invite volunteers to share their circles with a partner or small group.

Part II: People I Trust

1. Ask participants to turn over their worksheet to begin the second part of the activity. Let them know they'll be identifying people they trust with specific emotions, experiences, or situations.
2. Explain that for each prompt, they should write the name(s) of someone they trust in that context.
3. It's ok to list more than one person for a prompt or to repeat the same person across multiple prompts.
4. If they don't currently trust anyone with a particular topic, they can leave it blank or write "no one at this time."
 - a. For leaders: Walk around the room and observe quietly.
 - b. Pay attention to students who write "no one at this time."
 - c. Follow up with those students privately after the activity. Ask them about their experience and explore ways they might begin to build trust in that area.

Reflect

1. What did you learn about your support system?
2. How do the people in your support circle help you feel safe, valued, or understood?
3. Is there someone you'd like to add to your support circle in the future?
4. What steps can you take to strengthen your existing relationships?
5. How can you be a supportive person in someone else's circle?



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Circles of Support Handout

Acquaintances

Friends

Family



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Circles of Support Handout People I Trust



Activity	People you trust
I can be angry with...	
I can be quiet and comfortable with...	
I can laugh with...	
I can share my fears with...	
I can cry with...	
I can show affection verbally or nonverbally with...	
I can talk about an embarrassing experience with....	
I can discuss my dreams and hopes with...	
I can really be myself with...	



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Self-Care Kit — Feel Wheel

🕒 (Approx. 10 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson helps participants build emotional awareness and vocabulary by using the Feel Wheel. The goal is to help students identify and express their emotions more accurately, which is a key skill in self-awareness, communication, and emotional regulation. By exploring the layers of emotions, students learn to recognize the complexity of feelings and how to better support themselves and others.

- Display a Feel Wheel poster. If you don't have one, you can purchase one similar to [this](#).
- Prepare writing utensils for each participant.
- Arrange seating in a circle or small groups to encourage discussion.
- Review the Feel Wheel yourself to be familiar with its structure and emotional categories.

Set...

- Participants will learn to identify and name a wide range of emotions.
- Participants will understand how core emotions can expand into more specific feelings.
- Participants will begin to reflect on their own emotional experiences and how to communicate them.
- This activity builds empathy and emotional intelligence, which are foundational to being a Natural Helper.



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Go!

1. Distribute the Feel Wheel handout to each participant.
2. Explain the structure of the Feel Wheel:
 - a. The center contains core emotions (e.g., happy, sad, angry).
 - b. The outer layers expand into more specific emotions related to the core ones.
3. Ask students to take a few minutes to look at the wheel and identify one emotion they have felt recently.
4. Have participants write down the emotion and describe the situation that triggered it.
6. Encourage students to explore the layers of the wheel to find the most accurate word for their feeling.
7. Invite volunteers to share their emotion and story with the group (optional).
8. Facilitate a discussion about how naming emotions can help us understand ourselves and others better.
9. Reinforce that all emotions are valid and part of the human experience.

Reflect

1. Was it easy or difficult to find the right word for your emotion?
2. Did the Feel Wheel help you understand your feelings better?
3. How can identifying emotions help you support others?
4. Are there emotions you tend to ignore or avoid? Why?
5. How might you use the Feel Wheel in your daily life or when helping a friend?



Self-Care Kit — Masks

🕒 (Approx. 20 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson helps students explore the concept of emotional masks, how people sometimes hide their true feelings behind a facade. The goal is to encourage self-awareness, empathy, and open discussion about expression and support systems. Students will reflect on the emotions they show to others versus what they feel inside and identify trusted individuals they can be authentic with.

- Display or print a copy of the Masks Poem slide.
- Select a peer leader to read the Masks poem.
- Whiteboard or blank paper and pens/pencils.

Set...

- Participants will get to know their teammates better.
- Participants will begin to develop more emotional trust with teammates.
- Participants will understand the importance and practice being attentive listeners.



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Go!

1. Begin by having a peer leader ready the Masks poem aloud to the group.
 - a. Explain to the group that labels are often assigned to us by others and masks are what we choose to show the world. This activity is designed to help participants look beyond those masks and connect more authentically with one another.
2. Divide participants into small groups.
 - a. Ensure each group has enough space to talk comfortably without being distracted by other groups.
3. Tell the participants you will read a series of prompts that begin with 'If you really knew me, you would know...'
 - a. After each prompt, participants should take a moment to write down their response.
 - b. Once everyone has their response, they will share it with their group.
4. Emphasize that listening is just as important as sharing. Encourage them to give their full attention to each speaker.
5. Read one prompt at a time, allowing time for both writing and sharing.
- 6.

Reflect

1. What did you learn about yourself through this activity?
2. How can recognizing emotional masks help us be better friends and supporters?
3. What steps can you take to be more authentic with others?
4. Who is someone you trust to share your true feelings with?



Masks Poem

Don't be fooled by the face I wear, for I
wear a thousand masks, and none of
them are me.

Don't be fooled, please don't be fooled.

I give you the impression that I'm secure, that confidence is my name and coolness is my game,
And that I need no one. But don't believe me.

Beneath dwells the real me, a person scared to be vulnerable.

That's why I create a mask to hide behind, to shield me from the glance that knows,
But such a glance is precisely my salvation.

That is, if it's followed by acceptance, if it's followed by love.

It's the only thing that can liberate me from my own self-built prison walls.
And that you will reject me.

And so begins the parade of masks. I idly chatter to you.
I tell you everything that's really nothing

And nothing of what's everything, of what's crying within me.

Please listen carefully and try to hear more than my words.
I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous, and me.

But you've got to help me. You've got to hold out your hand.

Each time you're kind and gentle, and encouraging,
Each time you try to understand because you really care,
My heart begins to grow wings.

With your sensitivity and sympathy, and your power of understanding,
You can release me from my shallow world of uncertainty.

It will not be easy for you. The nearer you approach me,
The blinder I may strike back.

But I'm told that Love is stronger than strong walls,
And in this lies my only hope.

Please try to beat down these walls with firm but gentle hands

Who am I, you may wonder.

I am every man you meet, and also every woman that you meet,
And I am you, as well.



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Self-Care Kit — Scrolls

🕒 (Approx. 45 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson is designed to help students reflect on their personal values, strengths, and sources of support. By creating a symbolic 'scroll,' students will identify and affirm the qualities that help them navigate challenges, stay grounded, and maintain a sense of purpose. The goal is to foster self-awareness, resilience, and connection to supportive people and principles.

- Prepare enough blank sheets of paper for each student (e.g., easel pad Post-It Note).
- Have markers, pens, or colored pencils available for decorating the scrolls. Ensure students write their name at the top of their scroll.
- When participants are finished decorating their scrolls, hang them up around the main meeting room.

Set...

- Participants will identify personal values and sources of strength.
- Students will create a visual representation of their internal support system.
- Participants will gain a tool for their personal self-care kit.



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Go!

1. As participants arrive at the retreat, provide each person with a scroll and ask them to print their name at the top. Make pens/markers available for decoration.
 - a. Optional: take a photo of each participant, print it, and attach it to their scroll.
2. At the beginning of the retreat, explain to the group that they will have opportunities throughout the retreat to write positive comments about their fellow Natural Helpers on the scrolls.
3. Let participants know that the scrolls will be collected and presented to them at the end of the retreat. Encourage them not to read their own scrolls during the retreat but instead focus on writing thoughtful messages on others' scrolls.
4. Encourage participants to write on as many scrolls as possible during the time allotted. Staff should monitor the scrolls to ensure that only positive messages are written.
5. Staff are encouraged to contribute to the scrolls as well, ensuring that each student receives multiple positive comments.
6. Keep the scrolls accessible throughout the retreat and encourage participants to write whenever they feel inspired or after a meaningful interaction with someone.
7. At the close of the retreat, roll up each scroll and secure it with a rubber band. Make sure each participant collects their scroll at the end of the retreat.
8. Explain to participants that the scrolls are an important part of their Self-Care Kit. Encourage them to keep their scrolls throughout the year as a reminder to surround themselves with positive peers, both in-person and online.
9. Suggest participants read their scrolls when they are feeling down or need encouragement, as the messages reflect how their teammates positively view them.



Self-Care Kit — Sparks

🕒 (Approx. 30 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson is designed to help Natural Helpers identify and share their personal “Sparks,” the activities, interests, or passions that give them energy, purpose, and joy. By recognizing and nurturing these Sparks, students can build self-awareness, confidence, and emotional well-being. The goal is to encourage students to support each other in discovering and celebrating their Sparks as part of their self-care kit.

- Invite two or three Natural Helpers who have a Spark (dance, music, art, etc.) to share with the group. Encourage them to bring examples or demonstrate their Spark.
- Optional: Secure a copy of the book Sparks by Peter Benson for additional insights and activities.
- Prepare enough 3x5 cards for each participant.

Set...

- Participants will add a new tool to their Natural Helpers self-care kit.
- Participants will learn how to identify and nurture their own spark.
- Understand how to support classmates in discovering and growing their Sparks.



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Go!

1. Begin by explaining the concept of a Spark: an inner drive or passion that gives a person energy, purpose, and motivation.
2. Share how having a Spark and support to pursue it can lead to better mental and physical health, higher academic performance, and increased volunteerism.
3. Introduce the invited Natural Helpers and give them time to share their Sparks with the group.

Ask presenters key questions such as:

- a. At what age did you recognize your Spark?
 - b. Who nurtured your Spark and how?
 - c. How has having a Spark impacted your life?
4. Give the group time to reflect and discuss sparks.
 5. Distribute 3x5 cards and ask each participant to respond to the following questions:
 - a. Do you have a Spark? If so, what is it?
 - b. What makes you feel happy?
 - c. What are you interested in learning?
 - d. What do you think is your purpose in life?
 6. Form groups of three and have participants share their responses.
Allow 5–10 minutes for discussion.

Reflect

1. Did you gain any new insights about your potential Sparks?
2. What kind of support would help you pursue your Sparks?
3. How can you share your Spark with friends and trusted adults?



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Self-Care Kit — Trusted Adult

🕒 (Approx. 20 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson is designed to help participants identify trusted adults in their lives; individuals who they feel safe approaching for support or guidance. The goal is to encourage students to recognize the importance of having a support system and to take steps toward building and strengthening those connections.

- Ensure each participant has paper and a pen or pencil.
- Prepare a quiet and comfortable space for reflection and discussion.

Set...

- Participants will identify one or more trusted adults they feel comfortable approaching for help or guidance.
- Understand the role of trusted adults in providing emotional and practical support.
- Participants will consider ways to thank current trusted adults or invite new ones into their support network.

Go!

1. Begin by sharing with participants that an important element in their self-care kit is having a trusted adult in their life. Explain that a trusted adult is a reliable and caring source of support.
 - a. Ask participants to think about what qualities make someone a trusted adult.
2. Facilitate a brief discussion and list responses on an easel pad Post-It Note (e.g., listens well, respects privacy, gives good advice).
3. Ask participants to reflect quietly and write down the names of one or more adults they consider trusted.
4. Encourage them to think about how these adults have supported them or how they might be able to in the future.



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5. Allow time for students to form in pairs or small groups to discuss.
6. In the larger group, discuss the following questions in the large group setting:
 - a. How would you find a trusted adult if you do not have one?
 - b. Can adults take advantage of young people who are seeking a supportive relationship? If so, how?
 - c. What are some warning signs to be aware of in these relationships?
 - d. What are some basic rules you would suggest for students who are interacting with a trusted adult? (e.g., not an online person, parents are aware of this relationship, no secrets.)
7. Invite participants to write a short note of appreciation to a current trusted adult or draft a message inviting someone to be part of their support team.

Reflect

1. What did you learn about the importance of having a trusted adult?
2. How can you strengthen your relationship with a trusted adult?
3. What steps can you take if you feel you don't currently have a trusted adult in your life?
4. How can you help a friend find and connect with a trusted adult?



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Self-Care Kit — Untieland

🕒 (Approx. 25 minutes)



Ready?

This lesson uses a hands-on activity to help Natural Helpers understand the importance of self-care. Through symbolic interaction, students will learn that they must take care of themselves before they can effectively help others. The goal is to reinforce the concept that managing personal stress is essential to being a supportive and effective helper.

- Prepare enough shoelaces for each participant.
- Tie knots in all shoelaces except for two. Include a variety of knot difficulties (easy, medium, difficult) and some laces with multiple knots.
- Read the full lesson and story about Untieland in advance.
- Arrange seating in a circle with open space in the center.

Set...

- Participants will understand the importance of self-care in helping others.
- Participants will recognize that stress can affect their ability to support others.
- Participants will learn that seeking help and managing stress is a strength, not a weakness.



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Go!

1. Explain to the group that they will participate in an activity illustrating the importance of self-care.
2. Demonstrate how to hold one end of the shoelace with the non-dominant hand between the thumb and index finger.
3. Distribute the shoelaces, giving the two unknotted ones to participants comfortable with others approaching them.
4. Read the story of Untieland aloud to the group: "All of you live in a place called Untieland. Untieland's a really nice place to be. The people there are very friendly, hard-working, and especially good to each other. They love to help each other when they have problems. In fact, in Untieland, the more people you help, the more you are seen as an ideal citizen. People in Untieland suffer from stress. You can see that you are knotted up. Some of you have more than one knot. In Untieland, those people who are not knotted up, and only those people, can help others. You can help people in Untieland by using your free hand to help them untie their knots with their knots with their free hand. Here's how you do it..."
5. Demonstrate with a co-leader or participant how to use free hands to untie knots collaboratively.
6. Emphasize that only those without knots can help others. No teeth allowed, only free hands.
7. Inform participants that trainers will add knots during the activity to simulate stress.
8. Begin the activity and allow a few minutes for participants to help each other untie the knots.
9. Trainers should walk around and add knots with explanations (e.g., upcoming test, family conflict).
10. After about 10 minutes, gather the group to debrief.



Reflect

1. How did you feel when your shoelace was knotted?
2. How did you feel when your shoelace was no longer knotted?
3. Did anyone try to untie their own knot?
 - a. This is a good place to point out that people often don't think about helping themselves.
4. How was this activity like helping others? How was this activity not like helping others?
 - a. Point out that Natural Helpers are not valued based on how many people they help.
5. Consider sharing some of the following insights:
 - a. One person alone often cannot untie a knot without help, just like solving problems requires collaboration.
 - b. Helping others can sometimes create stress for the helper.
 - c. People can take turns helping each other, just like mutual support in real life.
 - d. Helpers may feel frustrated when they want to help but are too stressed themselves.
 - e. People can try to help themselves, but it's often harder without support.
 - f. Final message: Natural Helpers must care for themselves first to effectively help others.

