

Pocket Guide: **After-School Mental Health Consultation to Support Staff** **In Parent Engagement around Social and Emotional** **Learning**



Created by:



About the Partnerships that Form After-School Mental Health Consultation:



Illinois AfterSchool Network (IAN) - The Illinois AfterSchool network provides support to the afterschool and youth development field through professional development, leadership, and networking opportunities.



Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP) - The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership is committed to improving the scope, quality, and access of mental health programs, services, and supports for children, adolescents, and their families in Illinois.



Bright Promises Foundation – The Bright Promises Foundation is one of the oldest 501c3 public charities in Illinois solely dedicated to funding innovative programs that address emerging issues for at-risk children.

The Collaboration in Action

The Illinois AfterSchool Network and the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership engaged in a two-year grant to support seven after-school programs in Chicago. Each program received a mental health consultant to work directly with the program staff on supporting family engagement and the connection to social and emotional learning.



It is essential that parents and program staff collaborate and connect to support the social and emotional development of their children, which leads to academic success and the development of career and life skills. This manual offers ideas, resources, and activities to support that process. What will you find in this manual? The manual is divided into sections, which will give easy access to users. First and foremost, a fundamental view of the Afterschool Mental Health Consultation Framework explaining the objectives of this partnership: what mental health consultation looks like, expected services from consultants, and expected participation from the after-school programs. Other information in this resource manual includes the benefits and challenges in parent engagement, valuable research information on parent engagement, as well as observations and concerns from staff.

Self-Awareness

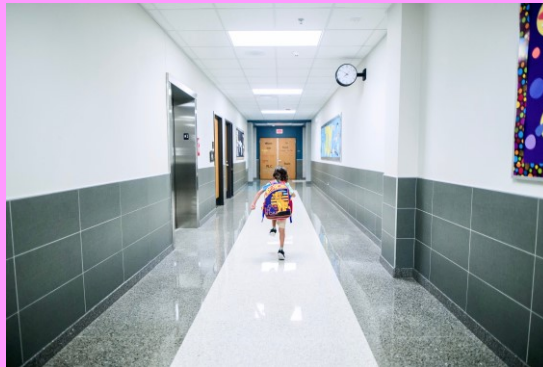
The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

- **IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS**
- **ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION**
- **RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS**
- **SELF-CONFIDENCE**
- **SELF-EFFICACY**

Check in before you check out exit passes:

Using exit tickets daily to ask students questions like:

- How are you feeling?
- What's new with you?
- What do you want to share with me?



Reflective Writing Using Prompts:

This activity is like journaling and can give many learners a voice when they have trouble speaking up or expressing themselves verbally. Give students regular times to either write freely about what's on their minds, or have them use prompts like these:

- Today I was proud of myself because ...
- I was anxious and stressed today because ...
- When was I at my best and worst today?
- How would I describe myself as a friend?
- Overall, I feel _____ about today because ...
- If I could talk to my future self, I would say ...
- One thing I wish others knew about me is ...
- What can I learn from my mistakes today?
- If I wrote the words I need to hear most, what would they be



Record your ABCs:

This is a good activity to do after you experience an adverse event. It is a helpful way to debrief yourself and get a chance to reflect and discover your beliefs after a big, negative incident occurs in your life.

A – Activating event that triggers your inner dialogue

B – Belief you formed after the event

C – Consequences or how your new belief makes you feel



Doing this can help you understand your response to stress.

While many people can experience the same activating adverse event, their thought processes about it can have a great impact on their lives moving forward. Using the ABC model can help people recognize their automatic thoughts when they're upset or mad and change those thoughts into positive things.

Ask the Three Whys:



Many self-awareness activities are simply asking yourself difficult questions and trying to answer as honestly as possible. The “three whys” is the perfect example of this.

The “Three Whys” are exactly what they sound like. **Before making a big decision, or if you are trying to get to the root of an issue, ask yourself “why?” three times.** This will help to reveal deep and specific issues that you may not otherwise consider.

It's not coincidental that “why?” is a rather simple question. It is an important realization that you must go a few layers deeper before making any critical decision. Whether you are trying to create a new business, hire a new employee, add a new feature to an existing product, or buy something expensive, you always have to dig a bit deeper to reveal the truth behind your motives.

Strengths and Weaknesses:

The following self-awareness worksheet has seven questions that can help a child to self-advocate. This worksheet can also be done with the child, to help them build an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

1. I am strong in these areas:
2. I struggle with:
3. My favorite thing about school is:
4. Here's what the teachers I'm most comfortable with do to make that happen:
5. The most stressful part of my school day is:
6. I'd like some help with:
7. When I need help, I'm comfortable asking for it in the following ways:



Best Possible Self:

The exercise has been shown to boost people's positive emotions, happiness levels, hope, optimism, improve coping skills, and elevate positive expectations about the future.



It works in two basic steps:

1. Visualizing yourself at a future moment in time having accomplished your goals
2. Considering the character strengths you'll need to deploy to make that vision a reality.

Please use the following steps on the next page to complete this activity:

1. Take a few minutes to select a future time period (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, 5 years from now) and imagine that at that time you are expressing your best possible self strongly. Visualize your best possible self in a way that is very pleasing to you and that you are interested in.

2. Imagine in vivid detail that you have worked hard and succeeded at accomplishing your life goals. You might think of this as reaching your full potential, hitting an important milestone, or realizing one of your life dreams. The point is not to think of unrealistic fantasies, but rather, things that are positive and attainable within reason.
3. After you have a fairly clear image, write about the details. Writing your best possible self down helps to create a logical structure for the future and can help you move from the realm of foggy ideas and fragmented thoughts to concrete, real possibilities.
4. Be sure to write about the character strengths that you observe in this image.
5. And, what character strengths will you need to deploy to make this best possible self a reality?

Note: The process by writing about the image before sitting back and playing it forward in their mind is an alternate method that can be used

Social Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- **PERSPECTIVE-TAKING**
- **EMPATHY**
- **APPRECIATING DIVERSITY**
- **RESPECT FOR OTHERS**



Kudos Board:

Our kids are very observant and creating an atmosphere of support through recognition and appreciation keeps them motivated and happy in class. Place a board in your class where learners can post positive feedback for peers on something they did, something they heard them say, or something they appreciate about another person.



See The World Through Another's Eyes:

For this mini-lesson, you will bring in a few pairs of real eyeglasses/sunglasses or make fake glasses using paper and string so students can put them on and “see the world through another person’s eyes.” You will explain that each pair of glasses belongs to a different person, which could be anyone your students are familiar with (e.g., a character in a book or film, someone from your partner classroom, etc.). Write the name of each “glasses’ owner” on a piece of paper and place it next to the corresponding glasses. Arrange them around the room before beginning the activity.

Decide in advance the specific questions you want students to answer once they put on the glasses. Ask questions that will uncover the internal feelings, thoughts, and motivations of the glasses’ owners.

For example:

- How did you feel when...
- Why did you decide to...
- What will you do if...
- How do you know that....

These questions can be adapted to fit several different learning goals, including socioemotional learning, language arts, literature, and writing goals. You may wish to create a handout to guide student responses.

This mini-lesson can be done class, in student pairs or groups, or independently.

1. Give instructions: Explain to students that each pair of glasses belongs to a different person who has their own set of feelings, beliefs, knowledge, and preferences. They will soon put on the glasses and try to see the world from that person's perspective. Remind students to consider what they know about the glasses' owner's preferences, immediate circumstances, personal experiences, and/or culture to understand how this person thinks and feels.

2. Model: Put on a pair of glasses to model the exercise. Think aloud, demonstrating how you will first look at the name to see who you are, and then close your eyes to truly imagine what life is like for this person and how she/he perceives the world. Use detailed imagery to help you get in the person's mindset. Then answer questions based on what you know about this person's perspective.

3. Facilitate the activity: Using the activity structure of your choice, have students take turns putting on the glasses and seeing the world from that person's perspective. Guide students through the steps of perspective taking.

4. Reflect as a class: Use some of these suggested questions to guide student reflection:

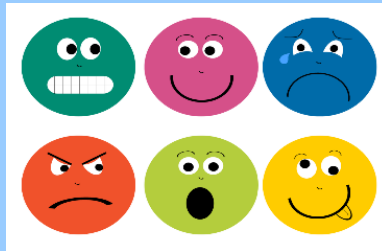
- How did it feel to see the world through another person's eyes?
- Were there things you felt or did that were different from how you would have responded? Why would you have responded differently compared to the glasses' owner?
- How can we practice perspective taking skills during an interaction with our partner?
- Think of an example where you did not agree with the way someone reacted or behaved in a certain situation. How can 'seeing the world through their eyes' help you better understand their behavior

Feelings Collage:

This is a fun activity to try in any classroom, especially if some of your students are especially shy and might have difficulty acting out emotions in front of the class.

Bring a big stack of magazines to class and give each of your students' art supplies: poster board or construction paper, scissors, glue sticks. Invite your students to cut pictures from the magazines of people expressing any kind of feeling and instruct them to use these images to build a "feelings collage." Hand out markers and ask students to label each picture in their collage with a feeling word; then, have them take turns explaining their collages and feeling labels to the group. Encourage your students to elaborate on the details of what they noted regarding the person's facial expression, their body language, or the context of the photo or illustration.

When the activity is over, let your students take the collages home. Recommend that they keep their collages and post them in a prominent place at home for use in practicing identifying and labeling their own feelings.



Alike and Different (Thumbprints):

Set out white 3" x 5" cards, a black ink pad, a pen, and a magnifying glass.

Ask the children to make prints of their thumbs by pressing them on the ink pad and then on the cards.

Label each print with the child's name.

Let children use the magnifying glass to see how the prints are alike and different. Point out that everyone has patterns on the skin of their fingers and each person's fingerprints are different from anyone else's.

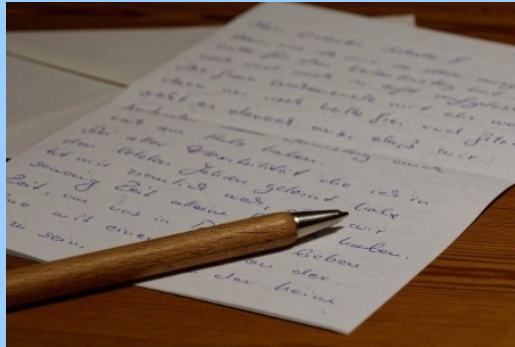


Write a Letter:

Everyone loves getting mail -- especially soldiers far from home or senior citizens without families of their own. You can help cheer up these sometimes forgotten citizens by writing short, encouraging notes all your own.

Write a letter to someone who could use a bit of encouragement and increase your social awareness at the same time. Writing to soldiers or to senior citizens can be a good way to start.

Remind the folks you write to that people care about them.





Self-Management

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- **IMPULSE CONTROL**
- **STRESS MANAGEMENT**
- **SELF-DISCIPLINE**
- **SELF-MOTIVATION**
- **GOAL SETTING**
- **ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

Red Light, Green Light:

It may not be a fancy, or glamorous game, but this has all the components of good activity for developing impulse control. The kid has to listen, has to choose to follow the rules, must have control of their body, and has to temporarily do something they don't want to (i.e.: stop at the "red light").



Simon Says:

Another low-tech, no-prep impulse control activity for children that focuses on listening, body control, and the ability to physically restrain yourself (i.e.: "Simon Says to clap your hands")



Taking Control – Stress and the Body:

On a flipchart, draw the shape of the human body and draw in different colors where stress affects the body i.e. tension in the neck, stomach aches, chest pains etc.

Invite others to do the same, it allows the participants to see what stress is doing to their bodies and how much they put themselves through. Also discuss what we like to do for ourselves and how we can build these things into our lives to help alleviate the stress.

Role Play:

Kids and young adults love acting scenarios out, but it can also be a great way to practice skills for self-control.



Come up with your own scenarios



Have students act out the situation in partners or small groups, considering what they would do and why. You can even invite students to act out the situation at the front of the class.



It is most important to highlight the socially appropriate choices and why they matter. This can be a fun addition to any morning meeting or social group time.



I Do My Best:



Help students understand when they learn best so that they can seek out and create situations to maximize their learning.

Have each student:

- Create a list that completes the phrase, “I focus best when...”
- Identify three things to seek and three things to avoid related to when they learn best.
- Have them keep a record of how often these situations occur and track their progress over time.

Note: Students may need additional support developing a list. Asking clarifying and guiding questions may be helpful.

The Mindful Jar:

This activity can teach children how strong emotions can take hold, and how to find peace when these strong emotions feel overwhelming.

- Get a clear jar (like a Mason jar) and fill it almost all the way with water.
- Add a big spoonful of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter to the jar. Put the lid back on the jar and shake it to make the glitter swirl.
- Use the following script or take inspiration from it to form your own mini-lesson:



“Imagine that the glitter is like your thoughts when you’re stressed, mad or upset. See how they whirl around and make it really hard to see clearly? That’s why it’s so easy to make silly decisions when you’re upset – because you’re not thinking clearly. Don’t worry this is normal and it happens in all of us (yep, grownups too).

[Now put the jar down in front of them.]

Now watch what happens when you’re still for a couple of moments. Keep watching. See how the glitter starts to settle and the water clears? Your mind works the same way. When you’re calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and you start to see things much clearer. Deep breaths during this calming process can help us settle when we feel a lot of emotions.”

This exercise not only helps children learn about how their emotions can cloud their thoughts, but it also facilitates the practice of mindfulness while focusing on the swirling glitter in the jar. Try having the kids focus on one emotion at a time, such as anger, and discuss how the shaken verse settling glitter is like that emotion.

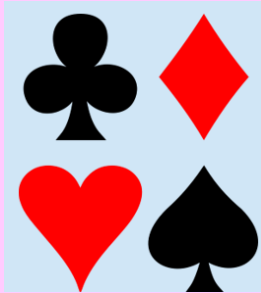
Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- **COMMUNICATION**
- **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT**
- **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**
- **TEAMWORK**

Card Pieces:

This exercise is a good way to help participants develop more empathy, consider other perspectives, build their communication and negotiation skills.



1. Cut each playing card into half diagonally, then in half diagonally again, so you have four triangular pieces for each card.
2. Mix all the pieces together and put equal numbers of cards into as many envelopes as you have teams.
3. Divide people up into teams of three or four. You need at least three teams. If you're short of people, teams of two will work just as well.
4. Give each team an envelope of playing card pieces.
5. Each team has three minutes to sort its pieces, determine which ones it needs to make complete cards, and develop a bargaining strategy.
6. After three minutes, allow the teams to start bartering for pieces. People can barter on their own or collectively with their team. Give the teams eight minutes to barter.
7. When the time is up, count each team's completed cards. Whichever team has the most cards wins the round.

Afterward, you can use these questions to guide discussion on the exercise:

- Which negotiation strategies worked? Which didn't?
- What could they have done better?
- What other skills, such as active listening or empathy, did they need to use?

Civic Responsibility:

Well-rounded individuals have a civic responsibility to strengthen the community that they live in. Service learning can be into the classroom to build this critical social engagement skill. Focus on community service so that students learn how to interact with their community in a new way, such as beach cleanup or building a home for the less fortunate.

Have students identify and develop a plan to complete a community service project. This project can be done as a group or individually.



Just Like Me Game:



This game is perfect for helping students learn about one another while having some fun. Here's how you play:

1. Have your students stand in a circle.
2. One at a time, students step forward and say a fact about themselves (e.g. I have one sister.).
3. If that statement is true for other students, they come forward one step and say "just like me!"
4. The next student steps forward and says his or her fact. Continue until all students have had a chance to go (and you could keep going, if you have time).

Scavenger Hunt:

This team building game requires some preparation, it encourages students to work together: planning a strategy, divvying up tasks and communicating progress.

Divide the students into teams and set a time limit in which they have to find as many items as possible on a list you've provided.

You can make this more challenging by providing clues or riddles rather than the names of items.



“Shark Tank”:



Similar to the popular TV show where entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to a panel of investors, this team building activity can be used in the classroom to encourage creative thinking and develop time management, presentation and public speaking skills.

Each team of students comes up with a product, brand name, logo and marketing strategy, which is then presented to the ‘panel.’ Encourage feedback from the ‘sharks,’ or other students, in the class.

Responsible Decision Making

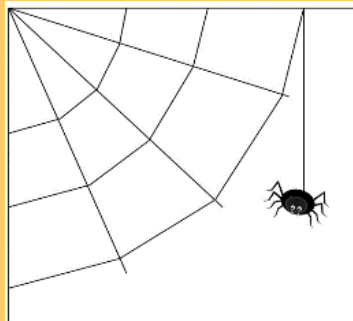
The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.

- **IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS**
- **ANALYZING SITUATIONS**
- **SOLVING PROBLEMS**
- **EVALUATING**
- **REFLECTING**
- **ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Wool Webs:

Divide your group into teams of equal numbers. Give each team a ball of yarn. Instruct the teams to create a web using only the yarn. Once the teams have finished (you may have to set an amount of time for completion), switch the teams around so that every team has a web other than their own. Each team then blindfolds one team member.

The goal is for the blindfolded individual to unwind the web following the verbal instruction of their teammates. In order to be successful, team members must concentrate, and give/follow directions. The first team that has dismantled the web wins this game.



Tower Building:

Although there are many variations to this game, this one using spaghetti and marshmallows is our favorite. Divide you group into teams with an equal number of players. Provide each team with an equal amount of spaghetti and marshmallows. The goal is to see which team can build the highest tower within a set amount of time.

Egg Drop Materials:

What You'll Need:

- A carton of eggs
- Basic construction materials such as newspapers, straws, tape, plastic wrap, balloons, rubber bands, popsicle sticks, etc., tarp, or drop cloth
- A parking lot, or some other place you don't mind getting messy!



Instructions:

1. Each team gets an egg and must select from the construction materials.
2. Give everyone 20-30 minutes to construct a carrier for the egg and protect it from breaking.
3. Drop each egg carrier off a ledge (i.e. over a balcony) and see whose carrier protects the egg from breaking.
4. If multiple eggs survive, keep increasing the height until only one egg is left

Stranded:

Here's the setting: Your team has been stranded in the classroom. The doors are locked and knocking down the doors or breaking the windows is not an option. Give your team 30 minutes to decide on 10 items in the classroom they need for survival and rank them in order of importance. The goal of the game is to have everyone agree on the 10 items and their ranking in 30 minutes.



Group Drawing:

Divide students into groups of three. Each person on the team has a one of the following roles:

- Drawer. The drawer attempts to recreate a pre-drawn design they cannot see. They take directions from the talker. They stand with their back to the talker and viewer and may not talk.
- Talker. The talker describes the design to the drawer, without seeing the design. They may question the viewer. They may not use hand gestures.
- Viewer. The viewer sees the design. However, they are not allowed to talk and must communicate nonverbally to the talker. Additionally, they must not draw the design in the air or actually show the design with their gestures.

The activity ends when the viewers say they are satisfied with the drawings.



Note: Please intersect this pocket guide with any other topic or age-appropriate content, be mindful there may need to be alterations based on the age group of students attending your after-school program.



