

## Module 7.3

# KINDNESS and COMPASSION for Educators



### TAKE IT DEEPER: 1 of 3

## Questions for Connectedness

Ask your students to brainstorm— what is kindness to them? What does a kind teacher look like? How do they act?

Consider doing this activity anonymously so students feel more comfortable responding honestly. You can also frame it so they are not talking about you specifically, but rather teachers in general. For younger students, use some of these prompts below.

A teacher shows kindness by \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers are kind when they \_\_\_\_\_

My teachers are kind because \_\_\_\_\_

My teachers show me compassion by \_\_\_\_\_

A teacher can show kindness by \_\_\_\_\_

What are \_\_\_\_ [pick a number] things teachers do to show they care?

### A Connected Moment

Research has shown that when we reflect on or write about times we felt a connection with someone else, it actually increases our feelings of connectedness and concern for others.

Take a moment to reflect on a time you felt really connected to a student or group of students or to your colleagues. Write about it in as much detail as you can. Write about the events that happened but also how it made you feel and the emotions you noticed in the students or your colleagues.

Reflection: How did it feel to reflect on this moment of connection? How might you make space for more moments like this in your day?

Research suggests that spending just 45 minutes engaging in self-disclosure with someone can dramatically increase feelings of connection between the two of you. Studies have also found that asking someone questions about themselves makes them feel seen and increases their feeling of belonging.

Practice adapted from [Feeling Connected for Adults](#)



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## TAKE IT DEEPER: 2 of 3

### Questions for Connectedness

You can use this activity at a staff meeting or retreat to increase bonding among colleagues.

#### Instructions

Before answering these questions, make sure both you and your partner are comfortable with sharing personal thoughts and feelings with each other. Choose two questions from Set I below. If you are leading a group in this exercise, you might choose the questions ahead of time.

If you have more time (and for the exercise to be more effective), choose more questions. Take turns asking one another the questions. Each person should answer each question, but in an alternating order, so that a different person goes first each time.

If time permits, choose more questions to ask each other from Set I, Set II, or Set III. (Note: Each set of questions is designed to be more probing than the previous one.)

#### Set I

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
3. Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?
4. What would constitute a "perfect" day for you?
5. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
7. Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?
8. Name three things you and your partner appear to have in common.
9. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
10. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
11. Take four minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible.
12. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

#### Set II

13. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?
14. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?
15. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
16. What do you value most in a friendship?



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#### TAKE IT DEEPER: 3 of 3 Questions for Connectedness

17. What is your most treasured memory?
18. What is your most terrible memory?
19. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?
20. What does friendship mean to you?
21. What roles do love and affection play in your life?
22. Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items.
23. How close and warm is your family? Do you feel your childhood was happier than most other people's?
24. How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

#### Set III

25. Make three true "we" statements each. For instance, "We are both in this room feeling..."
26. Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share..."
27. If you were going to become a close friend with your partner, please share what would be important for him or her to know.
28. Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.
29. Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.
30. When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?
31. Tell your partner something that you like about them (already).
32. What, if anything, is too serious to be joked about?
33. If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?
34. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
35. Of all the people in your family, whose death would you find most disturbing? Why?
36. Share a personal problem and ask your partner's advice on how he or she might handle it. Also, ask your partner to reflect back to you how you seem to be feeling about the problem you have chosen.

You can try this practice with different colleagues you want to develop a connection with—but if your answers start to feel routine, consider making up your own list of questions that become increasingly more personal.

Practice adapted from [36 Questions to Increase Connectedness at School](#)

