



California Social Emotional
Learning Modules

Professional Learning Toolkit

7.6 COURAGE for Educators

8.6 COURAGE for Students



Greater Good in Education



Topics 7 and 8: Mindfulness and Well-Being

Topic and Module Overview

Caring for Ourselves: The Science of Emotional Resilience	MOD 1.1	Understanding Your Emotions
	MOD 1.2	Navigating Your Emotions
	MOD 1.3	How to Be Kind to Yourself
	MOD 1.4	How to Be Compassionate Without Suffering So Much
	MOD 1.5	Self-Awareness, Emotional Resilience, and Equity
Safety & Belonging in Classrooms and Schools	MOD 2.1	Why Belonging Matters
	MOD 2.2	Knowing Ourselves First: Surfacing Our Beliefs About Social and Emotional Well-Being and Belonging in Schools
	MOD 2.3	The Questions of Belonging: Interventions to Help Students Feel Like They Belong
	MOD 2.4	Meeting Students' Psychological Needs to Help Them Feel Like They Belong
	MOD 2.5	Cultivating Belonging Through Teacher-Student and Peer Relationships
	MOD 2.6	Building a Belonging School Through Trust and Psychological Safety
Teaching for Social, Emotional, and Academic Development	MOD 3.1	Preparing to Support SEL in Classrooms
	MOD 3.2	Explicit SEL Instruction
	MOD 3.3	Planning for Social-Emotional-Academic Development
	MOD 3.4	Integrating SEL into Learning
Committing to Racial Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	MOD 4.1	Unpacking Our Identities: Addressing Identity, Power, and Privilege
	MOD 4.2	Engaging in Meaningful Conversations about Race and Equity
	MOD 4.3	SEL Instruction Through a Culturally Responsive Lens
	MOD 4.4	Elevating Student Voices
	MOD 4.5	Evaluating Our Systems, Policies, and Procedures
Addressing Trauma and Adversity: Supporting Student Mental Health	MOD 5.1	Defining and Understanding Trauma and Adversity
	MOD 5.2	Recognizing the Signs of Childhood Trauma and Adversity
	MOD 5.3	Creating Healing-Centered Environments
	MOD 5.4	Developmental and Other Strategies for Healing
	MOD 5.5	Mental Health Crisis Intervention: Steps and Strategies
Supporting SEL through Family and Community Engagement	MOD 6.1	Exploring Family and Community Engagement with an SEL Lens
	MOD 6.2	Building Partnerships with and Honoring the Contributions of Diverse Families
	MOD 6.3	Listening and Communicating Effectively with Families
	MOD 6.4	Expanded Learning and SEL: Collaborating Across In-School and OST Contexts
	MOD 6.5	Aligning around SEL Through Community Partnerships




Topic and Module Overview

Mindfulness and Well-Being for Educators	MOD 7.1	Purpose for Educators
	MOD 7.2	Self-Compassion for Educators
	MOD 7.3	Kindness and Compassion for Educators
	MOD 7.4	Gratitude for Educators
	MOD 7.5	Awe for Educators
	MOD 7.6	Courage for Educators
	MOD 7.7	Empathy for Educators
	MOD 7.8	Mindfulness for Educators
	MOD 7.9	Humility for Educators
	MOD 7.10	Forgiveness for Educators
	MOD 7.11	Hope for Educators
Mindfulness and Well-Being for Students	MOD 8.1	Purpose for Students
	MOD 8.2	Self-Compassion for Students
	MOD 8.3	Kindness and Compassion for Students
	MOD 8.4	Gratitude for Students
	MOD 8.5	Awe for Students
	MOD 8.6	Courage for Students
	MOD 8.7	Empathy for Students
	MOD 8.8	Mindfulness for Students
	MOD 8.9	Humility for Students
	MOD 8.10	Forgiveness for Students
	MOD 8.11	Hope for Students



Learning Objectives

TOPICS 7.6 and 8.6: COURAGE for Educators and Students

Module	7.6 Courage for Educators	8.6 Courage for Students
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the various components of courage ● Understand the difference between “general” courage and “personal” courage ● Define academic courage and its role in our learning and growth ● Understand what moral courage is and how it plays out at work and in life ● Examine the benefits of a courageous mindset ● Explore tools and practical strategies for cultivating courage in ourselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the various components of courage ● Understand the difference between “general” courage and “personal” courage ● Define academic courage and its relevance for students ● Understand what moral courage is and how it plays out for young people ● Examine the benefits of courage for young people ● Explore tools and practical strategies to help students find their courage
California Standards for Teaching Profession (CSTPs) 2024 CSTPs (full pdf) 	<p>CSTP 1: Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning 1A: Focus on Students (1A-1); 1B: Knowledge of Students (1B-5); 1C: Student Backgrounds and Family Engagement (1C-3); 1D: Diversity and Equity (1D-1)</p> <p>CSTP 2: Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning 2A: Learning Environment (2A-1); 2B: Student Behavior (2B-3); 2D: Inclusive Environment (2D-1)</p> <p>CSTP 3: Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Students 3E: Curriculum Materials and Resources (3E-5)</p> <p>CSTP 6: Developing as a Professional Educator 6A: Reflection on Practice (6A-2); 6B: Focused Professional Learning (6B-5); 6C: Collaboration with Colleague (6C-5); 6D: Collaboration with Families, Guardians, and the Community (6D-1); 6E: Ethical Conduct and Professional (6E-2); 6F: Activating Access and Equity (6F-1); 6G: Personal Growth and Well-Being (6G-1)</p>	
CA TSEL Guidelines Sourced from CDE (July 2023)	<p><i>Link Objectives to Developmental Indicators in California Transformative SEL Competencies. The California Department of Education (CDE) aims to support and advance the efforts of educators across California who are working to fully integrate systemic SEL and equity by building on the promise of T-SEL as a concept.</i></p>	



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.6 and 8.6: **COURAGE** for Educators and Students

Articles (Adult-Oriented)

[Four Ways Self-Compassion Can Help You Fight for Social Justice](#) Fierce self-compassion can help us cultivate the clarity and courage to stand up to oppression.

[How to Cultivate Ethical Courage](#) In the face of internal and external pressure, these three tips can help you stand up for your values.

[How to Live a More Courageous Life](#) Learning strategies to deal with your fears can help prepare you to take risks and change your life.

[How to Transform Stress into Courage and Connection](#) Stress doesn't always lead to fight-or-flight, says Kelly McGonigal. It can also activate brain systems that help us connect with other people.

[The Roots of Moral Courage](#) Why do some people risk their lives to help others? Kristen Renwick Monroe has dedicated her career to finding out.

[Six Tips for Speaking Up Against Bad Behavior](#) Psychologist Catherine Sanderson explains how to be more courageous in speaking up about bad behavior, from offensive speech to harmful actions.

[Six Ways to Find Your Courage During Challenging Times](#) Courage doesn't have to look dramatic or fearless. Sometimes it looks more like quiet perseverance.

[Three Tricky Ways to Cultivate Courage](#) Fear holding you back? Here are Christine Carter's favorite tactics for building bravery.

[When Courage Goes Bad](#) Who gets to be brave? Researcher Cynthia Pury argues that courage is very much in the eye of the beholder.

[Why Is It Hard to Speak Up for Racial Justice?](#) If we want to build a more equitable society, we need to cultivate the courage required for difficult conversations about race.

[Why Is It So Hard to Be Vulnerable?](#) A new study suggests that we judge ourselves more harshly than others do when we put ourselves out there.

Articles (Student-Oriented)

[Can We Be Hopeful and Courageous in the Face of Climate Change](#) A teenager draws on the work of Martin Luther King Jr. for inspiration in the fight against climate change.

[Four Ways to Help Students Cultivate Integrity](#) Educators can help students reflect on right and wrong and act in line with their values.

[How to Help Students Be the Best Version of Themselves](#) When students are facing challenges, educators can help them reflect on—and act on—what matters to them.

[A Way to Teach Courage in the Classroom](#) Teaching bravery entails role models, discussion, self-reflection, and understanding what courage is and how it works.

[What Stops People From Standing Up for What's Right?](#) Moral courage means standing up for our principles to stop wrongdoing or protect others, despite the risks. How can we foster it?



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.6 and 8.6: **COURAGE** for Educators and Students

Podcasts and Happiness Breaks

[Embodying Resilience, with Prentis Hemphill](#) (9:19) What if you could tap into your inherent resilience at any time? Prentis Hemphill guides a meditation to turn good memories into a state of resilience.

[A Meditation for Connecting in Polarized Times, with Scott Shigeoka](#) (9:07) Having a curious approach to life can improve our mood, creativity and relationships. Scott Shigeoka leads a visualization exercise to help you approach someone you might disagree with with an open and curious mind.

[When It's Hard to Connect, Try Being Curious](#) (17:31) When we're more curious, we are more likely to be happier and have stronger relationships. Try deepening your curiosity with these science-backed practices from author Scott Shigeoka.

[Are You Tired of Being Afraid?](#) (18:27) Fear is a normal part of our lives—but there are ways we can safely challenge and conquer it. Our guest tries a research-backed way to tackle a fear she's had since elementary school.

Videos

[How to Foster Courageous Dialogue in Schools](#) (1:16) At a time of increased polarization and conflict in schools, how can we develop the skills and habits of mind to engage in open, honest, and respectful conversations with our colleagues, students, and their families?

Customizable Slides for Students

[What is Courage?](#)

Download and customize these slides to teach students about courage.

Practices

Lower Elementary/Upper Elementary

[Building Collaborative Classroom Norms](#) Students co-create norms that foster a welcoming class environment and ensure safe discussions among peers, and develop a personal goal to help implement the norms. (less than 1 hour)

[Building Perseverance Through Role-Play](#) Students pretend to be a superhero or other hard-working character that they love while performing boring or difficult tasks. (less than 15 minutes)

[The Bystander's Dilemma: What Does Courage Look Like?](#) Students examine their role as a bystander in a fictional bullying scenario that involves their friends. They identify their emotions, reflect on their values, and consider courageous action as they decide how they would respond in this situation. (less than 30 minutes)

[Compass Points](#) Students evaluate an idea or proposition, share their opinions with other students, and take a stance on the matter. (less than 30 minutes)



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.6 and 8.6: **COURAGE** for Educators and Students

Practices

Lower Elementary/Upper Elementary

[Courage Blooms](#) Celebrate acts of courage throughout the school year and scaffold ways in which students can choose to act with courage. (less than 30 minutes)

[Courage Challenge](#) Students take on a courage challenge and share their experience with their classmates, crafting a chain of courageous acts that inspire them to be honest, zesty, persevering, and brave. (less than 1 hour)

[Courage Creatures](#) (Adaptable for all ages) Students learn about courage and see themselves as courageous by drawing their own courage creature and sharing it with others. (less than 1 hour)

[Courageous and Compassionate Citizens](#) Students brainstorm a current moral or civic issue facing society and explore how to use courage to address it. (less than 1 hour)

[Crumpled Reminder](#) Students write down a recent mistake and their feelings about it, and then crumple up the paper. Then they reflect on how their mistakes help them to learn. (less than 15 minutes)

[Identifying Acts of Courage](#) Students come up with ideas about what courage is, learn a scholarly definition of courage, reflect on courageous acts they have witnessed, and consider why they think courage is important. (less than 30 minutes)

[Learning from Courageous Forgivers](#) Students read *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, an example of a "forgiveness exemplar," and reflect on the value of being a forgiving person. (less than 1 hour)

[Literacy Book Bags to Encourage Courage](#) Students will discuss stories of courageous characters at school and at home, and consider how they can show courage. (less than 1 hour)

[The Pendulum](#) Students will identify people or situations that trigger shifts in their emotions and practice talking to others about their emotional experiences. (less than 15 minutes)

[Reflecting on Moral Dilemmas with Practical Wisdom](#) Students will develop practical wisdom by reading and reflecting on a moral dilemma with a set of guiding questions. Question sets prompt students to draw on past knowledge, understand the current context, and weigh various options up against guiding principles in order to determine next steps. (less than 1 hour)

[Reminders that Encourage Moral Character Strengths](#) Students identify important character strengths for the classroom, create a classroom character strengths board, and write stories of themselves that include the character strengths the classroom has agreed are important. (less than 1 hour)

[Who Are Your Heroes?](#) After hearing stories of heroes from the Giraffe Heroes Project, students nominate heroes and discuss the risks they took and whom they helped, cultivating an understanding of what makes a true hero. In small groups, students then creatively present a chosen hero's story. (multiple sessions)



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.6 and 8.6: **COURAGE** for Educators and Students

Practices

Middle and High School

[Building Collaborative Classroom Norms](#) Students co-create norms that foster a welcoming class environment and ensure safe discussions among peers, and develop a personal goal to help implement the norms. (less than 1 hour)

[The Bystander's Dilemma: What Does Courage Look Like?](#) Students examine their role as a bystander in a fictional bullying scenario that involves their friends. They identify their emotions, reflect on their values, and consider courageous action as they decide how they would respond in this situation. (less than 30 minutes)

[Compass Points](#) Students evaluate an idea or proposition, share their opinions with other students, and take a stance on the matter. (less than 30 minutes)

[Courage Blooms](#) Celebrate acts of courage throughout the school year and scaffold ways in which students can choose to act with courage. (less than 30 minutes)

[Courage Challenge](#) Students take on a courage challenge and share their experience with their classmates, crafting a chain of courageous acts that inspire them to be honest, zesty, persevering, and brave. (less than 1 hour)

[Crumpled Reminder](#) Students write down a recent mistake and their feelings about it, and then crumple up the paper. Then they reflect on how their mistakes help them to learn. (less than 15 minutes)

[Developing the Courage to Speak Up](#) Students use a "Courage to Speak Up" heuristic (a reflection tool) to raise their awareness of how they respond to prejudice—and to help them to develop the capacity to address moments of prejudice in an academic setting. (less than 15 minutes)

[Discovering Your Strengths and Talents](#) Students send emails to five trusted adults, asking them what they think are students' strengths, talents, unique contributions to the world, and how to go about achieving their goals. (less than 1 hour)

[Exploring Your Personal Values](#) Students sort value statements in order of importance, and then reflect on the ones that mean the most to them. (less than 1 hour)

[Identifying Acts of Courage](#) Students come up with ideas about what courage is, learn a scholarly definition of courage, reflect on courageous acts they have witnessed, and consider why they think courage is important. (less than 30 minutes)

[It's Up to Us to Stick Our Necks Out](#) Students "hear the story," "tell the story," and "be the story," becoming inspired by everyday heroes, then choose, organize, and carry out a service project to address a problem they care about. (multiple sessions)

[Navigating Challenging Emotions During Difficult Conversations](#) Students will practice noticing and labeling bodily sensations and feelings (e.g., anxiety, anger, fear, shame) as they arise before, during, and after challenging conversations, and practice multiple coping strategies for navigating their emotions. (multiple sessions)



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.6 and 8.6: **COURAGE** for Educators and Students

Practices

Middle and High School

[Reflecting on Moral Dilemmas with Practical Wisdom](#) Students will develop practical wisdom by reading and reflecting on a moral dilemma with a set of guiding questions. Question sets prompt students to draw on past knowledge, understand the current context, and weigh various options up against guiding principles in order to determine next steps. (less than 1 hour)

[Reminders that Encourage Moral Character Strengths](#) Students identify important character strengths for the classroom, create a classroom character strengths board, and write stories of themselves that include the character strengths the classroom has agreed are important. (less than 1 hour)

[Student Self Check-In Journal](#) Use a values-informed reflective process to help students make ethical decisions with open-mindedness, integrity, and fairness. (less than 15 minutes)

[Truth in Journalism and Dorothy Thompson](#) Students learn of a courageous figure, reflect on how they might exhibit greater courage in the classroom, and make a commitment to engage in one courageous act. (less than 30 minutes)

[Who Are Your Heroes?](#) After hearing stories of heroes from the Giraffe Heroes Project, students nominate heroes and discuss the risks they took and whom they helped, cultivating an understanding of what makes a true hero. In small groups, students then creatively present a chosen hero's story. (multiple sessions)



Additional Resources

TOPICS 7.6 and 8.6: **COURAGE** for Educators and Students

Practices

Adult

[Crumpled Reminder](#) Students write down a recent mistake and their feelings about it, and then crumple up the paper. Then they reflect on how their mistakes help them to learn. (less than 15 minutes)

[Courageous Connections that Challenge Your Biases](#) Honestly assess your personal biases and their impact, and create a plan to face the anxieties you experience about people you dislike or avoid. Next, practice courage and openness while interacting with those individuals, and reflect on what you learned. (less than 30 minutes)

[Courageously Embracing Our Mistakes](#) Staff members think of a mistake they recently made, reflect on what they learned from it, and celebrate their growth. (less than 15 minutes)

[Developing the Courage to Speak Up](#) Staff use a “Courage to Speak Up” heuristic (a reflection tool) to raise their awareness of how they respond to prejudice—and to help them to develop the capacity to address moments of prejudice in an academic setting. (less than 15 minutes)

[Eight Inner Strengths for Leaders](#) School and teacher leaders use reflective questions to assess leadership strengths individually, with each other, or as a whole group, and then develop a plan for improvement. (less than 15 minutes)

[Making Values-Informed Decisions](#) Staff use reflective questions to assess possibilities, navigate dilemmas, and make the best possible choice to serve the needs of the individual, team, community, and learning environment. (less than 1 hour)

[Self Check-In Journal](#) Use a values-informed reflective process to make ethical decisions with open-mindedness, integrity, equity, and justice in order to respond in a meaningful and responsible manner. (less than 15 minutes)

[Strategies to Promote Courageous Dialogue](#) Staff foster practical wisdom by identifying three goals, two for themselves and one for the school that they can work on based on the topic discussed during a faculty and staff meeting. (less than 15 minutes)

[Use Your Strengths](#) Choose a personal strength, write how you're going to use the strength today, and then carry out your plan. (less than 15 minutes)

[Vulnerable and Courageous](#) Staff members watch a video clip about courage and vulnerability, reflect on situations at work that make them feel vulnerable, and consider how to courageously embrace their own vulnerabilities. (less than 30 minutes)



Module 7.6

COURAGE for Students and Educators



TAKE IT DEEPER:

Your Courage Hero

When we want to foster more courage in ourselves, it can be helpful to look to the people we admire or who show great courage in our lives.

Think of someone you know, or someone famous, who has shown (or continues to show) great courage. Use the space below to write a paragraph (or a few bullet points) about this person, using these questions as prompts:

- Why do you consider this person courageous?
- What have they been through or done that required/requires courage?
- What other character traits or strengths do they have that you think boost their courage?
- What contexts or supports surrounding this person can you identify as courage boosters?

A large, empty gray rectangular area intended for students to write their responses to the prompts.

Now take a moment to reflect on the following:

- Can you identify some traits or strengths that you have in common with this courage hero?
- What life experiences can you relate to with this person, if any?
- What contexts or supports do you have to support your courage?

A large, empty gray rectangular area intended for students to reflect on the questions.

Module 8.6

COURAGE for Students



TAKE IT DEEPER: (for Adolescents and Adults)

Courage for Ethical Decision-Making: Checkpoints

Young people are still learning about their values, morality, and ethical behaviors. So much of this is influenced at home, by their culture, and the larger society we live in. However, we can introduce some strategies at school— to encourage students to slow down and consider how to weigh competing values when facing moral or ethical dilemmas.

Rushworth Kidder's (2005) book on moral courage features Checkpoints for ethical decision-making. Below is an adapted list we can share with students. Consider inviting students to think of an ethical dilemma they have faced in the past or are currently addressing— as they reflect on the checkpoints below.

Imagine you were faced with this situation or think of a moral dilemma from your own life, and reflect on the following questions.

- **What is your gut reaction to this situation:** What are you feeling? Thinking? How stressful is this situation? Is stress or other emotions impacting your ability to think clearly?
- **Key Values:** What values are most important right now? Being kind? Respectful? Compassionate? Fair? How might this influence your decision-making and actions?
- **Possible Risks & Consequences:** What are the risks or consequences involved if you act versus if you don't?
- **Persevere through Difficulty:** Will I be able to persevere through the challenge or consequences of my actions? Or is this a bit over my head? Should I reach out for support instead?
- **Barriers to Courage:** What is getting in the way of my courage? Fear? Anxiety? Ability? What help might I need to pursue my goal?
- **Is this a Noble Goal?** Is what I'm trying to do helpful or harmful to other people? Is it just in my self-interest, or will it benefit others?

After considering these questions and weighing competing values in this context, what may be the best course of action? Why or why not?

Discussion Questions:

- What makes it difficult to navigate ethical or moral dilemmas?
- Is there always a clear or best choice? How do you decide what the "right" course of action is?

