Rationale:
“New Hampshire has adopted the Jesse Choose Love curriculum to promote Social Emotional Learning (SEL)” and to provide a “comprehensive system of care for children’s behavioral health” (Department of Education, 2021). Choose Love curriculum is currently available to schools, as well as specific programs designed for homes and communities. The Child Welfare Education Partnership is partnering with Choose Love to create the first Choose Love program specifically designed for caregivers including foster and adoptive parents, residential staff, relative caregivers, and other eligible community members.

The course will introduce caregivers to the Choose Love program. The Choose Love program’s formula is based on four-character values: courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action, which will be discussed and practiced promoting the well-being and resilience of children and youth in care. The course will provide caregivers with information and tangible skills they can use for themselves and with children and youth in their care.

Resource

Needs Analysis: (what is the problem you are trying to solve) Caregivers play a pivotal role in the well-being and resilience of children in their care. Often children in care have experienced great trauma. Caregivers who mentor the Choose Love mindset and teach the Choose Love skills to children in their care will be creating a positive, nurturing foundation for these children to continue to grow and develop.

Course Overview

Course Description
The course will introduce caregivers to the Choose Love program. The Choose Love program’s formula is based on four-character values: courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action, which will be discussed and practiced promoting the well-being and resilience of children and youth in care. The course will provide caregivers with information and opportunities to exercise these character values themselves, as well as identify meaningful ways to use and share the Choose Love formula with children and youth in their care.

Learning Outcomes
• Explore the foundational concepts behind the Choose Love formula and understand how social-emotional skills and ideas can benefit children and youth
  • Develop an understanding of the neuroscience behind thoughts and emotions and how this influences how individuals react to various situations
• Recognize the ability and choice to control one’s response to various situations
• Evaluate courage and how it can be utilized by caregivers and children and youth in their care
• Examine the concept of post-traumatic growth and how caregivers can support children and youth as they begin to heal from trauma
Choose Love for Caregivers

- Recognize gratitude and explore the ability and choice to be thankful even during challenging life circumstances
- Examine the benefits of gratitude and explore ways to regularly practice gratitude
- Develop an understanding of how gratitude can be used to help children and youth evaluate their emotions and shift their mindset
- Differentiate forgiveness and acceptance and discuss the influence forgiveness has on the body
- Analyze 12 principles of forgiveness and develop an understanding of self-awareness and emotional management strategies
- Examine self-forgiveness and the potential implications for caregivers, children, and youth.
- Recognize negative self-talk and the “inner critic” voice and discover how to shift thinking in more positive and productive ways
- Discuss the value of compassion for oneself and others, and explore ways to engage in compassionate listening
- Differentiate empathy from sympathy and examine ways caregivers can demonstrate empathy with children and youth
- Reflect on course concepts and discuss learning and future growth opportunities

Course Map

Introduction

In your post, please be sure to include your first name, what town/area you live in, and your goals for taking this class. Specifically, have you heard of Choose Love before? What are you curious about related to this topic?
Choose Love for Caregivers
Please do not post identifying information about yourself, your family, children-in-care, or their families. Please maintain the highest level of confidentiality.

1) Pre- and End of Course Knowledge Check
*Use this space to create a 5 – 10 question knowledge check*
*In Moodle Pre&Post*

1) Pre- and End of Course Knowledge Check

*Use this space to create a 5 – 10 question knowledge check*

1) Select the components *(values)* of the Choose Love formula (select all that apply)
   a) Forgiveness
   b) Peace
   c) Gratitude
   d) Compassion in Action
   e) Reflection
   f) Courage

2) Post-traumatic growth is:
   a. a personal characteristic that allows individuals to “bounce back” from a traumatic experience.
   b. a concentrated breathing and body relaxation technique that can help calm the body and mind
   c. a process that occurs when an individual experiences positive changes in themselves, as a result of the struggle with traumatic events
   d. the ability to be aware of one’s own emotions and the emotions of others

3) According to Dr. MacLean’s Triune Model of the Brain, the reptilian brain or “lizard brain”...
   a) is responsible for your emotions and social behavior. It helps you make value judgments (e.g., deciding whether something is right or wrong).
   b) is the part of the brain that first alerts you to danger and is the fastest to respond. It regulates breathing, heart rate, and body temperature and keeps you alert and reactive to your environment
   c) helps you think clearly and problem-solve. It is responsible for imagination, thought, planning, and responsible decision-making.
   d) All of the above
   e) None of the above

4) Select statements that are TRUE about forgiveness
   a) Forgiveness means condoning what the other person has done
Choose Love for Caregivers

b) **Forgiveness is the choice to let go of anger and resentment toward yourself or someone else**

c) Forgiveness means the other person is no longer accountable for their actions

d) **Forgiveness is a process and can take time, especially for those who have been deeply hurt or offended**

e) Forgiveness requires the other person to apologize and take responsibility for what they have done

5) You can practice empathy by (select all that apply):

   a) Changing the subject to something more positive when someone shares with you difficult news or a challenge

   b) **Observing and listening without labeling or judging others**

   d) Trying to cheer someone up by making a joke or telling them things could be worse

   c) **Understanding someone else’s perspective and “feeling emotions with them”**

   d) **Being an active listener and connecting on a personal level**

   e) All of the above

6) The cognitive triangle shows...

   a) How we learn in an academic setting

   b) How our brains develop over time

   c) How we learn to develop language

   **d) How our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected**

7) Choose Love programs, resources, and extension programs are available for **free** and can be accessed by creating a free account on the Choose Love website.

   **True**

   **False**

8) Courage... (Select ALL of the TRUE statements)

   a) **Helps us regulate our fear responses**

   b) **Empowers us to accomplish things**

   c) Is only something outgoing and extroverted individuals have
Choose Love for Caregivers

c) Helps us manage our emotions

d) Is a characteristic some people are either born with or not

9) Which one of these statements shows evidence of a growth mindset?

a) You are so smart!

b) I can really see how much effort and hard work you put into this

c) It’s okay, math is not for everyone.

d) You have a natural talent for basketball

10) The 4 dimensions of gratitude are:

a) intensity, volume, ease, and group gratitude

b) spiritual, emotional, physical, and social

c) health, home, purpose, and community

d) influence, individual consideration, motivation, and performance expectation

---

Week 1 – Intro to Choose Love & Courage

Overview

Welcome to Week 1! This week will provide an introduction to the Choose Love formula: Courage + Gratitude + Forgiveness + Compassion in Action = Choosing Love. Background information about the program and neuroscience supporting Choose Love will be discussed. This week also includes an examination of the first component of Choosing Love: courage. The idea of courage, and other concepts throughout the course, are intended to be both beneficial to the children and youth in your care, but also to your own lives as individuals and caregivers. Throughout the course, you may be encouraged to engage in activities and reflect on your own experiences. This self-reflection and awareness can allow caregivers to better introduce and incorporate Choose Love with children and youth, by developing a deep understanding, appreciation for, and experience with the underlying concepts. This course is meant to be experiential, meaning we hope you choose courage and try out some of the ideas and activities suggested throughout the course. This is meant to be a safe space for you to learn, explore, and ask questions along the way. It is perfectly normal to feel outside of your comfort zone, as that is where learning takes place!

Learning Outcomes

1/22/2021
Choose Love for Caregivers

- Explore the foundational concepts behind the Choose Love formula and understand how social-emotional skills and ideas can benefit children and youth
- Develop an understanding of the neuroscience behind thoughts and emotions and how this influences how individuals react to various situations
- Recognize the ability and choice to control one’s response to various situations
- Evaluate courage and how it can be utilized by caregivers and children and youth in their care
- Examine the concept of post-traumatic growth and how caregivers can support children and youth as they begin to heal from trauma

**Read, Review, Watch**

Choose Love Welcome Video (Shannon’s Intro) [https://community.granite.edu/mod/resource/view.php?id=173291](https://community.granite.edu/mod/resource/view.php?id=173291)

Video The Formula for Choosing Love (4:07) [https://safeshare.tv/x/I8VtHEmsQVc](https://safeshare.tv/x/I8VtHEmsQVc)

Page: This video features the founder of the Choose Love program, Scarlett Lewis, who introduces the Choose Love formula and described each component. This introductory video sets a foundation in which to guide course topics and situates current and future interactions within children and youth within the context of the Choose Love formula.

Scarlett Lewis founded Choose Love Movement after her son, Jesse, was murdered during the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy in December 2012. It is one of the worst mass shootings in U.S. history.

At six years old, Jesse, alongside 19 of his first-grade classmates and six educators, died. Law enforcement says Jesse used his final moments to heroically save nine of his friends.

Shortly after his death, Scarlett discovered a message Jesse had written on their kitchen chalkboard. It was written phonetically, as it would have been by a six-year-old, but it read, (pictured below) “Norturting Helinn Love” (Nurturing, Healing Love).

Scarlett knew instantly that Jesse intended those words to be a way she could frame the tragedy and what it could teach the world about how to avoid tragedies like this in the future. After hours of research, she learned that these three words are included in the definition of “compassion” across cultures.

4) **Nurturing** means loving kindness and gratitude.
5) **Healing** means forgiveness.
6) **Love** is compassion in action.

She realized that love, connection, and belonging are universal wants and needs that connect all of humanity and that if the shooter had received more of it in his life, the tragedy might never have happened.
Choose Love for Caregivers
Scarlett set out on a mission to teach as many people as possible around the world about this message, beginning with children.

With the guidance of Christopher Kukk, Ph.D., Dean of the Cormier Honors College for Citizen Scholars and Professor of Political Science at Longwood University, a Fulbright Scholar and author of “The Compassionate Achiever,” these three words (Nurturing Healing Love) led to the creation of a formula that can be used by anyone, at anytime, anywhere in the world to manage their response to any situation, incorporated into a NO COST, lifespan Social & Emotional Learning and Character Development program.

The Choose Love Formula™ is based on the profound result of practicing the character values inherent in “Nurturing Healing Love,” which are:

Courage + Gratitude + Forgiveness + Compassion in Action.

These four values are easy to learn. When practiced, they strengthen the health and resilience of individuals, improve the community and culture of groups, and promote a safer, more peaceful, and loving world.

Page: The Neuroscience of Choosing Love

Video Neuroscience Behind Choose Love Programs (6:11) https://safeshare.tv/x/zh6h1r1mOhU

This video outlines a brain model and explains the neuroscience behind the concepts within the Choose Love program. You will learn the significance of "leaving the lizard" and "nudging the numbat" and "hugging the human."

This visual image above demonstrated Dr. Paul MacLean's model of the Triune Brain.

We can think of our brain consisting of three parts. Each of these parts has a unique job and together these parts help us understand our experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose Love Terminology</th>
<th>Scientific Terminology</th>
<th>Description of the role each part of the brain plays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lizard Brain</td>
<td>Reptilian Brain</td>
<td>Regulates breathing and heart rate, and body temperature. Keeps you alert and reactive to your environment. Controls your balance, coordination, and reflexes. This is the part of the brain that first alerts you to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbat Brain</td>
<td>Mammalian Brain</td>
<td>Mammalian Brain is responsible for your emotions and social behavior. It helps you make value judgments (e.g., deciding whether something is right or wrong). It strongly influences your behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Brain</td>
<td>Primate Brain</td>
<td>Primate Brain helps you think clearly and problem-solve. It is responsible for imagination, thought, planning, and responsible decision-making. It helps you learn language and is the source of self-control.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Video Hand Model of the Brain (2:32) [https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5f2b6159847f9](https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5f2b6159847f9)

In this video, Dan Siegel uses a simple hand model to demonstrate how sometimes emotions can dominate our brain function, causing us to “flip our lid.” This concept can be shared with children and youth.

Video Neuroplasticity Video (2:04) [https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5f35d1239ee16](https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5f35d1239ee16)

This video describes the ability of the brain to rewire itself as it introduces the concept of neuroplasticity.

Neuroplasticity gives us the ability to change our brains, including the ways we think, feel, behave, and create habits. We can take advantage of the capacity to rewire our brains to change our thoughts, emotions, behaviors, or beliefs. Children and youth in care may have developed habits, behaviors, thoughts, and feelings as a result of a fear response. These have been hard-wired into their brains to keep them safe; however, we can help change and re-wire these brain connections.

Page: Harnessing the Power to Choose our Thoughts

Children and youth who come into care have experienced trauma; however, this trauma does not define them. Each child and youth may respond to trauma in their own way and find strategies to process and work through their experiences and circumstances. As caregivers, we can help guide children and youth by equipping them with tools and strategies that empower youth to work through their past experiences and achieve their unique personal growth potential.

An important concept within the Choose Love program is harnessing the power of choice in how we respond to situations.
Choose Love for Caregivers
Embedded video “We can’t always choose what happens to us, we can always choose how we respond” (1:48)
Cognitive%20Triangle%20Reframing.mp4

ILink to Implementation Guide:
https://community.granite.edu/pluginfile.php/226328/mod_page/content/6/Implementation%20Guide.pdf

This guide may also be found in the Course Information located at the top of your course home page. This Implementation Guide is optional and not graded, however we strongly encourage you to print and/or download this guide to make notes when practicing different activities and reviewing reflective questions.

Page: Social-Emotional Learning and Emotional Intelligence

Changing our thoughts, feelings, and actions requires us to be aware of our current state. It can be useful to make a practice of taking your “emotional temperature” and thinking about how you are feeling throughout your day. We want children and youth to develop their social-emotional competence, or their ability to be aware of their own emotions and the emotions of others. To help children and youth develop social-emotional competence, it is useful that we first develop this within ourselves.

The following self-assessment will help you understand your own social-emotional competence or, emotional intelligence. Please access the link below to complete the self-assessment. You are not required to submit this assessment; however, you will be asked to submit a reflection about your overall results.

Assessment:
https://community.granite.edu/pluginfile.php/225568/mod_page/content/8/Emotional%20Intelligence%20Self%20Assessment.pdf

Page: Post-Traumatic Growth
Image flower breaking through concrete
During challenging times we have an opportunity to experience positive growth, which is referred to as Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG). PTG is defined as a psychological shift in how individuals think about and relate to the world. They have experienced an intense struggle, yet this has created an opportunity for positive changes and outcomes. Post-traumatic growth is sometimes confused with resilience; however, they are different. We can think of resilience as a personal characteristic that allows individuals to “bounce back” from a traumatic experience. Having resilience does not necessarily mean individuals will learn and grow from their experiences, yet post-traumatic growth can explain this phenomenon. Post-traumatic growth is a process and occurs when an individual experiences positive changes in themselves, because of the struggle with traumatic events.
Choose Love for Caregivers
Psychologists have created inventory tools to evaluate whether and to what extent an individual has achieved post-traumatic growth. These inventory tools look for positive responses within 5 domains:

- Appreciation of life
- Relationships with others
- New possibilities in life
- Personal strength
- Spiritual change

Post-traumatic growth has meaningful implications for children and youth in care. We may not be able to change past circumstances, yet children and youth may experience positive personal growth following trauma. As caregivers, we can promote an environment that allows for post-traumatic growth to occur. Children and youth who have experienced trauma can benefit from consistent and supportive relationships with trusted adults. By demonstrating compassion, reliability, and unwavering commitment to youth, caregivers can help children and youth feel safe and cared for. The presence and predictability of a safe environment, in addition to focused awareness strategies, can be beneficial to children and youth in supporting opportunities for post-traumatic growth.

Sources:


Page: Courage

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”- Nelson Mandela

While some stress can be positive, repeatedly experiencing stress and fear for long periods of time has negative consequences. Prolonged exposure to stress can have harmful effects on the immune and digestive systems, one’s confidence, and one’s ability to reach goals. Fear can perpetuate anxiety and negatively impact health outcomes. Naming emotions and being aware of how one’s body responds to fear and stress can help us to move from fear towards courage.

Courage is the foundation for other values within the Choose Love formula. It takes courage to practice Choosing Love. **Courage** is the ability and willingness to work through obstacles despite feeling embarrassed, afraid, reluctant, or uncertain. Courage empowers us to accomplish things, helps us master our emotions,
Choose Love for Caregivers

make good choices, maintain balance, and overcome fear. Courage requires practice; the more often we practice being brave, the more automatic it becomes to respond with courage.

When children and youth are experiencing fearful thoughts, their bodies initiate a “fight or flight” response and release the stress hormone cortisol. Too much cortisol can be harmful, and that is why finding courage to calm this fear response can be beneficial.

Refer to the strategies and techniques located at the end of this week to practice the "Brave Breath".

Page:

Week 1: PRACTICE & SHARE: Focused Awareness Strategies

Please review and trial as many practices as you wish. For the purpose of this assignment, you must select one to trial starting today. We will share the outcomes of this practice in our discussion board next week.

You may access your Implementation Guide to record different practices used and make note of what you observed. Things to think about when practicing: How do you feel after completing the activity? When might you use this strategy or suggest a child or youth in your care to use this strategy?

Focused awareness strategies are an important part of Choose Love programs. You will find opportunities within this course to learn about and practice some of these strategies, but you are encouraged to further explore Choose Love For Home 2.0 program and the free extension programs available at https://chooselovemovement.org/

Remember, courage is the foundation for choosing love, and it takes courage to try something new and share your experiences with others!

Grounding: This technique can help when individuals are feeling overwhelmed and begin to feel they are losing control of their thoughts. This technique can help bring individuals back to the present moment.

Grounding Techniques Instructional Video (9:35 min) https://safeshare.tv/x/q81Gh2CYXo
In this instructional video, you will learn how to use grounding techniques that can help us acknowledge our bodies and surroundings, especially if we are feeling stressed.

Mindfulness: The practice of being fully present in what one is feeling and sensing in the moment without judgment. Practicing mindfulness can help us reduce stress by focusing on our current state rather than focusing on things out of our control, past events, or future unknowns.

Mindful Minute Video (1:25 min) https://safeshare.tv/x/HklBiwzswC4
This video provides a rationale for meditating.

Mindful Minute Practice Video #1 (3:11 min) https://soundcloud.com/david-yeah-dave-romanelli/mindful-minute-1
This video is a short guided meditation.
**Choose Love for Caregivers**

**Being Present Moment Video:** (7:50 min) https://safeshare.tv/x/qB8wWvKLf7A This video discusses strategies for being present in the moment to help us become more self-aware, be better listeners, and help relieve stress and anxiety.

**Body Scan Meditation-Mindfulness for Kids and Adults** (3.27 min) https://safeshare.tv/x/ss5f2c10f4acc67
This video will walk you through a guided body scan meditation to help you bring awareness to your body and the present moment.

**Havening Techniques:** This includes powerful tools that can be used to alleviate the consequences of traumatic or stressful events. Havening is a method that is intended to change the brain to de-traumatize the memory and remove its negative effects from both our psyche and body.

When we experience stress, worry, or fear a very old part of our brain, the amygdala, becomes active and can stay active for a long time. This is what leads to anxiety, anger, and even depression. An overactive amygdala also causes distractibility and impairs learning. Having an overactive amygdala is hard for anyone but it is especially difficult for children, adolescents, and teens whose brains are already navigating a lot of new experiences. New advances in brain science have highlighted a really simple tool to calm the amygdala.

Self-Havening empowers emotional regulation through gentle self-applied touch and brain games such as singing songs or imaginal exercises. It soothes an anxious brain by down regulating a hyperactive amygdala and uses something called neuroplasticity to build resilience and positive feelings.

**Facilitated Self-Havening Touch** (32.20) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qlz-sye89ec
This video provides an opportunity for you to listen and apply this technique.
Visit [https://www.havening.org/](https://www.havening.org/) to learn more.

**Tapping:** Tapping, also known as Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), is a powerful, holistic healing technique that has been proven to effectively resolve a range of issues. It is a useful self-regulation technique.

**Tapping Solution with Alex Ortner Video** (9.23 min) https://safeshare.tv/x/M-ndCwZv0O4
In this video you will learn a technique called tapping, which can be used to calm and relax the body.

**Bravery Affirmations:** Affirmations are statements that can be repeated to help train your brain to believe them. The more often you repeat these Bravery affirmations, the easier it will be for you to respond with courage in any situation.

![Image w/bravery affirmations in colorful boxes.](https://safeshare.tv/x/fsbgLq7bBoU)

This instructional video introduces the “Brave Breath,” a focused awareness strategy that can help individuals be in the present moment.

**Activities**

1st Activity:

**Week 1 Discussion 1: "flip your lid"**

**DIRECTIONS:** (1) Respond to your instructor's question(s) below by end of week. (2) Read all other posts.

Think of a situation when your "Lizard" brain took over causing you to "flip your lid". Be specific. How might you have approached this situation differently if your "Numbat" had hugged your "Human"?

2nd Activity:

**Week 1 Reflection 1: Case Study Reflection**
Choose Love for Caregivers
Kimmy, 13, has been in your care for 5 months. It has taken some time for Kimmy to open up to you, but over the past couple of weeks you have felt like you have started to create a trusting bond. You’ve been planning a special movie night for weeks. Both of you agreed on a movie and some favorite snacks. You are busy getting everything ready and eagerly go to find Kimmy. She has been a little “off” the past few days. She had a visit with her birth family earlier in the week and you think this may be a factor. When you tell her it is time for movie night, she says she is not interested. When you ask why, she becomes visibly upset. She stands up to look at you and says, “Because I hate it here and I hate you, okay? Now, just leave me alone!”

Reflection Question: Think about what we have learned about the brain and what Kimmy might be experiencing.
1. How does understanding how the brain works help you to make sense of Kimmy saying something hurtful to her caregiver?
2. How could you respond in this circumstance by choosing love?

3rd Activity:
Week 1 Reflection 2:
How can understanding your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, be beneficial to you in your role as a caregiver for children and youth?
What area(s) from your emotional self-assessment can you work to develop further?

4th Activity:

Week 1 Discussion 2: Courageous Caregiver, Courageous Children & Youth

DIRECTIONS: (1) Respond to your instructor's question(s) below by midweek. (2) Comment on a minimum of ONE other post by Friday.

It takes courage to be a caregiver for children and youth. In your role as a caregiver, think about when you may need to demonstrated courage.

When might you need to guide children and youth to be courageous?
How might you use the tools and strategies discussed during this module to practice courage for yourself and those in your care?

5th Activity:
Review and Practice Strategies and tools use Implementation Guide

Week 2 – Exploring the Benefits of Gratitude
Overview
Choose Love for Caregivers

This week we will learn about the second component of the Choose Love formula: Gratitude. We will explore what gratitude is, the benefits it has on our health and wellbeing, and ways in which caregivers can practice gratitude and share gratitude practices with the children and youth in their care. You will have opportunities throughout this week to try and reflect on gratitude practices and activities yourself and possibly even with others in your life. Practicing gratitude can be beneficial to us personally, but also to children and youth. We can improve our own gratitude skills and model these practices for children and youth. Children and youth may see caregivers adopting an “attitude of gratitude” and incorporating mindful thankfulness into their daily lives, which may positively influence youth and encourage them to practice gratitude as well. Additionally, this week we will examine mindsets and how we can address negative self-talk and our “inner critic.” We will discuss ways to respond to our inner critic voice through more positive and productive means.

Learning Outcomes

- Recognize gratitude as mindful thankfulness and explore the ability and choice to be thankful even during challenging life circumstances
- Examine the benefits of gratitude and explore ways to regularly practice gratitude
- Develop an understanding of how gratitude can be used to help children and youth evaluate their emotions and shift their mindset
- Recognize negative self-talk and the “inner critic” voice and discover how to shift thinking in more positive and productive ways

Read, Review, Watch

Page: What is Gratitude and Why Does it Matter?

Embedded video: The Science of Gratitude (2:07) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMd1CcGZYwU

This video introduces the benefits of gratitude and presents ideas for how to cultivate an “attitude of gratitude”
Gratitude is mindful thankfulness and the ability to be thankful even when things are challenging. When you practice gratitude, you feel thankful and want to share that feeling with others. We can be grateful for anything: people, places, ideas, feelings, relationships, nature, things we’ve learned, etc. Gratitude is a complex experience because it engages multiple aspects of our self-awareness. It includes our thoughts, emotions, body sensations, and what we want to happen. Gratitude can benefit us physically, mentally, and emotionally. Some of the potential benefits of gratitude include:

- Increased feelings of happiness
- Improved relationships
- Improved health
- Increased optimism
- Improved self-esteem
- Increased resilience
- Increased energy levels
- Increased ability to relax
- Improved sleep quality
- Enhances capacity to connect with others

Video Gratitude Breath (1:46) https://youtu.be/VgLuKa9ZkRM
As we learned in week 1, neuroplasticity allows us to actually change our brains, which supports us in changing our habits. The more we change our brains, the easier it will be to maintain new habits. The more we practice new habits, the more we change our brains. This is called a positive feedback loop. Our brains and bodies work together to reinforce the change we want to make. Just like a muscle, the thoughts and feelings we experience the most will grow strongest. Our brain’s strongest pathways attract the most traffic, like a highway instead of an unused dirt road. We can choose which pathway we exercise and support the most.

Dimension of Gratitude

Researchers have suggested there are 4 dimensions of gratitude:

1) Intensity
2) Ease
3) Volume
4) Group Gratitude

Intensity is the depth of feeling you experience. For example, a small emotion vs. an emotion that might move you to tears. Ease refers to how easy it is for you to elicit grateful feelings. Volume is the quantity or number of things you are grateful for at the same time. For example, you may be feeling grateful for your shoes, sunshine, your car, and your friends. Group gratitude is the number of individuals you are grateful for in relation to a single event. For example, you are grateful for the 50 people who attended the surprise party you hosted.

Applying 4 Dimensions of Gratitude

Choose something you are grateful for and focus your attention on it.

- Rate how intense that feeling is (1 is low intensity, 10 high intensity)
- Rate how easy it is for you to feel gratitude in your example (1 is very easy, 10 very difficult)
- Are there multiple things you can be grateful for within your example, or is it one specific thing? Write out each item.
- Are there multiple people involved in your example, or a few? Name all people involved if you can.

How does engaging in this exercise make you feel?

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Choose Love for Caregivers

What is a mindset?
A mindset is an established attitude held by someone. We can have a positive or negative mindset, or what is referred to as a **growth mindset** or a **fixed mindset**.

### Two Mindsets

*Graphic by Nigel Holmes*  
Mindset Works Website: https://www.mindsetworks.com/Science/Impact

To view the graphic in detail and learn more about the Impact of a Growth Mindset.

**Research shows that the benefits to a growth mindset may include:**

- higher likelihood to embrace challenges and strive for goals and tasks outside their comfort zone
- persistence in the face of setbacks
- higher motivation and achievement
- ability to learn and grow from feedback and criticism
- ability to find inspiration in the success of others
- reducing “stereotype threat” of a situation in which people are at risk of confirming a negative stereotype about themselves
- increasing positive behavior and reducing aggressive behavior
Choose Love for Caregivers
Research shows that caregivers can have an influential impact on the mindsets of children and youth. The language we use and the actions we take send messages to children about our expectations. The way we provide praise to children and youth is important. When we provide praise children for being smart, it reinforces a fixed mindset. Children will begin to think that they either have an ability or they do not and that accomplishing something is tied to an internal characteristic. However, if we instead praise children for their effort and working hard, even and especially when they are struggling, it reinforces a growth mindset. Children will begin to understand that their effort is linked to their success and their abilities are not pre-determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say This (Support Growth Mindset)</th>
<th>Not That (Reinforces Fixed Mindset)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I can see you worked so hard at this!”</td>
<td>“You are so smart!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You have worked really hard at this. I wonder if we can find a way to make it more challenging/try something more advanced so your brain can grow”</td>
<td>“You are a natural at that”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s okay, you haven’t figured this out yet. What other strategies can you try to help you understand it better?”</td>
<td>“Maybe this is just not your thing”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How else do we cultivate a growth mindset?

- Focus efforts on seeking to learn, improve, persevere
- Learn about the brain and neuroplasticity
- Forgive oneself: accept and honor the intentions of actions even when faced with failure
- Question judgmental thoughts: when you find yourself judging someone else, stop and identify the fears or insecurities that may be leading you to judge that person
- Share more about your failures
- Remember: success is not just about winning or achieving, it is about growing as a person

Think About Your Mindset
Words can be powerful. Words can ruin someone’s day or lift them up. One way we can change our own perspective is to change our words. One way to do this is to reframe our obligations. We can refer to the things we “have to” do as the things we “get to” do.

Activity-
Think about some things you “have” to do this week. Think about how having to do those things makes you feel. Now reframe your list. Instead of a list of things you “have” to do this week, modify this to a list of things you “get” to do this week. Your new statements might sound strange to you, but that is okay! For example, you might be wondering how you could find gratitude in taking the garbage out. But by thinking, “I get to take the garbage out,” you may more readily find gratitude within this task. You might think about how grateful you are to the employees of the waste management company or you may be reminded of the food you enjoyed eating over the week.

When you change a “have to” to a “get to” and practice gratitude, you are changing your attitude, you

File: PowerPoint Slide Show Positive Self-Talk (8:41)
Choose Love for Caregivers
The PowerPoint above has one embedded video from YouTube. Please select "enable eternal content for this session" to view the presentation.

Week 2: Practice and Share Gratitude

Please review and trial as many practices as you wish. For the purpose of this assignment you must select one to trial starting today. We will share the outcomes of this practice in our discussion board next week.

You may access your Implementation Guide to record different practices used and make note of what you observed. Things to think about when practicing: How do you feel after completing the activity? When might you use this strategy or suggest a child or youth in your care to use this strategy?

Remember, courage is the foundation for choosing love, and it takes courage to try something new and share your experiences with others!

Establish a Gratitude Practice:

Gratitude Journal- Start a gratitude journal. Each night before bed, write 3-5 things you are grateful for each day. A journal is a private place for you to write and gain clarity on what you truly appreciate in your life. It can increase your self-awareness and help you gain insights into what matters to you.

Gratitude Jar- Create an attitude of gratitude practice within your home or work environment. At the end of each day, have each member of the family or organization write something they are grateful for. At the end of each week or month, empty the contents of the jar to read the collective thankfulness.
Act on Your Feelings of Gratitude—Tell or show someone you are grateful for them or what they have done. This could be as simple as reaching out to someone to tell them how important they are to you or sending someone a note.

Go on a Gratitude Stroll—Take a short walk and be present and mindful of your surroundings. Tap into your 5 senses. Take a few gratitude breaths as you walk. Think about 5 things you are grateful for that you can SEE, 4 things you are grateful for that you can TOUCH, 3 things you are grateful for that you can HEAR, 2 things you are grateful for that you can SMELL, and 1 thing you are grateful for that you can TASTE. Think about how it felt to be in the present moment and notice your surroundings using your 5 senses.

Activities

1st Activity:

Week 2 Discussion 1: PRACTICE & SHARE Applying Focused Awareness Strategies (from week 1)

DIRECTIONS: (1) Respond to your instructor’s question(s) below by end of week. (2) Read all other responses.

Select ONE of the strategies/techniques shared last week.
Choose Love for Caregivers
1. What strategy did you select?

2. What worked and/or did not work for you. Please describe any insights you learned while practicing this strategy.

3. Do you think you will try this strategy again? If not, is there another strategy you already practice or are interested in?

Remember courage is the foundation for choosing love, and it takes courage to try something new and share your experiences with others!

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2nd Activity:

Week 2 Discussion 2: Gratitude Reflection

**DIRECTIONS:** (1) Respond to your instructor's question(s) below by end of week. (2) Read all other comments.

Take a moment and identify something you are grateful for. When you think about this person, thing, or experience, how do you feel? How does your body respond? Does it relax, feel warm, or uplifted? Does it make you feel differently? Does it change your attitude? Notice what you want based on these feelings-Do you want to reach out to this person, experience something again, etc.

Notice how gratitude engages your whole self.

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3rd Activity:

Week 2 Discussion 3: Practice Addressing Negative Self-Talk

**DIRECTIONS:** (1) Respond to your instructor's question(s) below by midweek. (2) Reply to one other post by end of week.

Please take a moment and read the following youth statements. As you read each one, select two of these to provide a written response to. Think about how you may help this youth address their negative self-talk and what you would say.

1. **Youth says:** "Ughh. I'm so stupid. Everyone else understand this in my class."
   
   Please write your response:

   2. **Youth says:** "Nobody cares about me or cares what happens to me."
   
   Please write your response:

   3. **Youth says:** "It's not even worth trying (a sport, new hobby, activity, etc.). I know I'll fail at it."
   
   Please write your response:

   4. **Youth says:** "I'm just a bad kid and I will never amount to anything."
4th Activity – Review and practice strategies and tools

Week 3 – The Meaning of Forgiveness

Overview

In this 3rd module of the course, we will explore forgiveness. We will examine what it means to forgive others and ourselves. The benefits of forgiveness will be discussed and how forgiving can be beneficial to both caregivers and the children and youth in their care. This week we will consider ways to understand and communicate anger, as well as share techniques for managing frustrations. We will make a distinction between forgiveness and accountability, and explore 12 principles of forgiveness.

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate forgiveness and acceptance and discuss the influence forgiveness has on the body
- Analyze 12 principles of forgiveness and develop an understanding of self-awareness and emotional management strategies
- Examine self-forgiveness and the potential implications for caregivers, children, and youth

Read, Review, Watch

File: What is Forgiveness? PowerPoint Slideshow (7 min)

The PowerPoint above has one embedded video from YouTube. Please select "enable eternal content for this session" to view the presentation.

Page: What is Forgiveness

What is Forgiveness?

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you. ~ Lewis B. Smedes

As you start this module, please take a moment to think about what forgiveness means to you. What does it look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Forgiveness: Letting Go of Grudges and Bitterness (pdf)
https://community.granite.edu/pluginfile.php/227432/mod_page/content/5/Forgiveness%20Letting%20go%20of%20grudges%20and%20bitterness.pdf: This article discusses how to let go of grudges to begin to forgive others.
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Letting go of grudges and bitterness can make way for improved health and peace of mind.

Forgiveness brings

PEACE

Healthier relationships
Improved mental health
Less anxiety, stress, and hostility
Lower blood pressure
Fewer symptoms of depression
A stronger immune system
Improved heart health
Improved self-esteem

Forgiveness can lead to...

Cutting the cord

Play Video (1:31) https://youtu.be/fRVytwnRCSo: In this video Scarlett Lewis discusses how she took her personal power back by choosing forgiveness and cutting the cord that attached to her pain.

Forgiveness is a choice and is completely up to an individual person who is looking to forgive. It has little to do with the person you are choosing to forgive because you choose to forgive not for them, but for yourself. The person you choose to forgive does not need to apologize or acknowledge any wrongdoing for you to forgive them. There is not a need for that person to be a part of your life or even to be alive anymore. Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself. It is an act of letting go and taking your personal power back and not give it away to someone who has hurt you. It means cutting the cord that attaches you to pain and letting it go.

Emotions are natural and can teach us something important about ourselves and our relationships with others. Emotions help us make decisions about how we want to act and how we want to treat other people. Feeling any emotion for extended amounts of time can be unhealthy and unhelpful in reaching your goals. Anger, in particular, can have a negative impact on your health if you are angry for a long period of time. Anger stimulates the “fight or flight” response in our brain. As you may recall from module 1, our body’s response is to release cortisol and adrenaline, which can cause negative health consequences. Therefore, finding ways to release and let go of anger can lead to better health outcomes.

Sometimes forgiveness is easy, while other times it can be difficult. Forgiveness is a conscious decision that is made after weighing the options. Just because you choose to forgive does not mean you will immediately stop feeling angry. Forgiveness is a process and can take time, especially for those who have been deeply hurt or offended. You may need to repeat this process of forgiveness many times. However, each time you do you are benefiting by letting go of anger.

Forgiveness video (4:13) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFPeKSvfLbo

This inspirational video discusses the value of forgiveness. As you watch it, think about your own life and anything you may be holding onto.
Choose Love for Caregivers

"Taking responsibility for our own feelings and reactions is mastering our ability to respond. In other words, we learn to consciously choose rather than react."

Sources cited:

4 https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/forgiveness/art-20047692

Forgiveness vs. Accountability

Forgiveness is different from accountability. Remember, forgiveness is the choice to let go of anger and resentment towards yourself or someone else. It is a decision to surrender any thoughts of revenge and to move forward with your personal power intact. Accountability is about accepting responsibility for one’s actions. When you forgive, it does not mean you are ignoring what the person did and it does not mean that the person is not accountable or responsible for their actions. Forgiveness simply focuses on letting go of anger and refusing revenge.

Think about the difference between forgiveness and accountability as you watch this video clip:

The Power of Forgiveness Video (3:28 min) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2BITY-3Mp4:

This video showcases a powerful story of forgiveness, featuring a Minneapolis mother whose son was murdered. She now lives next door to and is friends with her son’s murderer.

Effective Apologies

It takes courage to practice forgiveness. Sometimes we must find the courage to accept the things we cannot change, including things we have done in the past. It takes courage to admit we made a mistake and to ask for forgiveness. It also takes courage to forgive yourself and let go of judgment about what you could have or should not have done.

There are 4 steps to an effective apology:

Step 1: Explain what you are sorry for
Step 2: Tell the person why you are sorry
Step 3: Explain what you will do if the situation happens again
Step 4: Ask for forgiveness

Effective apologies may sound like:
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Step 1: I am sorry for...
Step 2: It was wrong because...
Step 3: Next time I will...
Step 4: Will you forgive me?

12 Principles of Forgiveness

Watch: Jack Kornfield: 12 Principles of Forgiveness Video (13:42 min) Jack Kornfield: 12 Principles of Forgiveness

: Acclaimed author and teacher, Jack Kornfield, explains the principles that are integral to the process of forgiving

1 Question Quiz – Select 3 statements that are NOT part of the principles of forgiveness

Select the 3 statements that are not part of the principles of forgiveness.

a. Be willing to grieve and let go
b. Holding onto anger and resentment is healthier than letting go
c. Sometimes trauma is stored in our physical bodies
d. Discover (in relation to your identity) you don't have to be loyal to your suffering
e. Understand that forgiveness is a process, not a single action
f. Perspective
g. **Forgiveness is not a choice, it is something that occurs over time**
h. You have to set your intention for forgiveness
i. Reflect on the benefits of a loving heart
j. Start with the easiest thing that can open your heart

k. **Forgiveness means ignoring what another person has done**
l. Sense the suffering that comes with the inability to forgive
m. Understanding what forgiveness is and what it is not

File: Your Brain and Anger (12 min) PowerPoint Slideshow

The PowerPoint above has embedded videos from YouTube. Please select "enable eternal content for this session" to view the presentation.

Page: Self Forgiveness

Self-Forgiveness
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Think of a time when you made a mistake or another person was hurt by something you did. Consider something in your own life you may want to ask forgiveness for. Did you make amends or could you make amends now? What have you learned from the situation? Have you forgiven yourself and let it go? If you haven’t, could you?

Remember forgiveness is not easy, especially self-forgiveness. This is a process. As you forgive yourself, acknowledge that you have taken responsibility. Take a deep breath and imagine the weight of the issue falling from your body.

Helping Youth Forgive Themselves

Children and youth who have experienced trauma and come into care may choose to forgive others, but they also may need help and guidance to forgive themselves. Children and youth may feel responsible for what has happened, they may feel guilt and may blame themselves¹. Although they should not place blame on themselves, these thoughts and feelings they have are real. As caregivers, we can help youth to understand they do not need to hold on to feelings of blame for their circumstances. We can help youth choose to let go and forgive themselves.


Please review and trial as many practices as you wish. For the purpose of this assignment you must select one to trial starting today. We will share the outcomes of this practice in our discussion board next week.

You may access your Implementation Guide to record different practices used and make note of what you observed.

Things to think about when practicing: How do you feel after completing the activity? When might you use this strategy or suggest a child or youth in your care to use this strategy?

Remember, courage is the foundation for choosing love, and it takes courage to try something new and share your experiences with others!

- Forgiveness Practice: Ho’oponopono Video (3:50 mins)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCWPelFV2-s
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- **Effective Apology Practice**: Use the 4 steps to an effective apology to write an apology to someone in your life who you would like to ask for forgiveness. If you have the ability and would like to, share the apology with that person. Reflect on what it was like to write an apology in this way and to ask for forgiveness. How did this process make you feel?

- **Visualization Meditation (1:00 min)** Powerpoint slideshow: As you open this presentation, you may wish to close your eyes or stare gently at the photo.

- **Zensational Kids Mindfulness Activities (pdf)**
  https://community.granite.edu/pluginfile.php/227194/mod_page/content/11/Zensational%20Workbook.pdf a cost-free extension program of Choose Love

## Implementation Guide

**Remember to refer to your Implementation Guide.** Different reflective questions as you continue to practice and apply these concepts into your caregiver role.

### Activities

1st Activity:

### Week 3 Discussion 1: PRACTICE & SHARE Gratitude (from week 2)

**DIRECTIONS:** (1) Respond to your instructor’s question(s) below by end of week.

Select ONE of the Gratitude Practices shared last week.

1. What practice did you select?
2. What worked and/or did not work for you? Please describe any insights you learned while practicing.
3. Do you think you will try this practice again? If not, is there another practice you are interested in?

Remember courage is the foundation for choosing love, and it takes courage to try something new and share your experiences with others!

2nd Activity:

**Quiz** Select the 3 statements that are not part of the principles of forgiveness.

Select one or more:

a. Sometimes trauma is stored in our physical bodies
b. Sense the suffering that comes with the inability to forgive
c. Be willing to grieve and let go
d. Understanding what forgiveness is and what it is not
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e. You have to set your intention for forgiveness

f. Start with the easiest thing that can open your heart

**g. Holding onto anger and resentment is healthier than letting go**

h. Perspective

i. Reflect on the benefits of a loving heart

**j. Forgiveness is not a choice, it is something that occurs over time**

k. Discover (in relation to your identity) you don't have to be loyal to your suffering

**l. Forgiveness means ignoring what another person has done**

m. Understand that forgiveness is a process, not a single action

3rd Activity:

Quiz Reflective Case Study – Forgiving Birth Parents

Please take a moment to view the following case study video (1.45) provided above. As you do so, think about the significance of forgiveness in this situation as it relates to your relationship with Wyatt’s birth parents.

In what ways may forgiveness be challenging? In what ways might it be beneficial to choose forgiveness in this situation? These questions will be asked in the following Reflection Activity.

Wyatt Case Study – Forgiving Birth Parents Video Transcript: Wyatt, 9, is a child in your care. When Wyatt first came to you, he was scared and undernourished. You have learned that Wyatt experienced extreme neglect. His living conditions were unsanitary, and he did not receive consistent or appropriate nutrition. Wyatt’s mother has had challenges with her mental health and substance misuse, although she is currently in treatment. Wyatt’s mother is also a victim of intimate partner violence. Wyatt’s birth father was often physically aggressive toward Wyatt’s mother, and Wyatt was present during many of these incidents. Wyatt’s father has expressed his commitment towards “getting help to control his anger” and has been working through a program recommended by the caseworker. Wyatt cares deeply about his family. He frequently tells stories about “the good times when mom isn’t sick, and dad isn’t angry” where he reminisces about playing ball in the park with his dad and helping his mom take care of his baby sister. Both of Wyatt’s parents have missed out on visitations and planned phone calls. You have watched the disappointment on Wyatt’s face on numerous occasions. You have come to deeply care for Wyatt and have concerns about his well-being. You have found yourself feeling resentment towards Wyatt’s parents and have found it challenging to forgive them for Wyatt’s past circumstances.

Describe the significance of forgiveness in this situation as it relates to your relationship with Wyatt’s birth parents.

In what ways may forgiveness be challenging?

In what ways might it be beneficial to choose forgiveness in this situation?

4th Activity

Quiz Reflective Case Study – Youth Self-Forgiveness
Choose Love for Caregivers

Please take a moment to view the following case study video (1:08) provided above. As you do so, place yourself as Alice’s current caregiver. Think about how can you help her realize she is not responsible for what has happened to her and guide her towards self-forgiveness?

These questions will be asked in the following Reflection Activity.

Video transcript: Case Study- Alice, 12, is a child in your care. Alice was removed from her home following her disclosure of sexual abuse against a relative living within the home. Alice blames herself for the abuse and thinks it is her fault the abuse has happened. Alice looked after her younger siblings and felt it was her duty to protect and take care of her younger siblings. When she came into care, she was separated from her siblings and blames herself for their separation. She feels an immense amount of guilt for separating and exposing her family. She feels her birth mother is angry with her for saying something to her teacher.

As Alice’s current caregiver, how can you help her realize she is not responsible for what has happened to her and guide her towards self-forgiveness?

5th Activity

Review and practice the strategies and tools

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**Week 4 – Compassion in Action for Caregivers**

**Overview**

Welcome to our final week of the course! This week we will focus on the last ingredient of the Choose Love formula: Compassion in Action. We will start our week with a LIVE Zoom session, which will allow us all an opportunity to connect with one another in real-time. **Remember to join our Zoom session on: 11/1 at 6:00 pm.** Additionally, through the material in this week’s online module, you will have the opportunity to develop a greater awareness of what compassion is and how we can demonstrate compassion for ourselves and others. As you leave this course, it is our hope that you will continue to practice the Choose Love formula in your own lives for yourselves and with the children and youth in your care. We encourage you to further explore cost-free programs, resources, and extension programs available to you on the Choose Love website: [https://chooselovemovement.org/](https://chooselovemovement.org/)

**Learning Outcomes**

- Discuss the value of compassion for oneself and others, and explore ways to engage in compassionate listening
- Differentiate empathy from sympathy and examine ways caregivers can demonstrate empathy with children and youth
- Reflect on course concepts and discuss learning and future growth opportunities amongst peers

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**Read, Review, Watch**

1/22/2021
Week 4 Ungraded Optional Activity - Communicate with Instructor

As you prepare for your Zoom session and review your Implementation Guide please feel free to use this reflection quiz to submit any questions you may have. These questions will be viewed by your instructor prior to the Zoom session.

Reserve your calendar for Monday, 11/1/21 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm to attend our Zoom Classroom.

Please plan to have your completed Implementation Guide with you as we may be referring to this during our Zoom session. If you have not completed your Implementation Guide, please plan to have it available or printed so you may refer to it during the meeting and write down any thoughts that may occur that you will wish to do going forward.

There is an expectation that you will join the Zoom with your VIDEO ON.

Below is your Zoom Invitation. Please select this link 10 minutes prior to start. Should you have any issues, please contact:

Stephanie Banks is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Choose Love Live Zoom Session

Time: Nov 1, 2021 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

https://granite.zoom.us/j/87165290610

Page: Compassion in Action for Caregivers

“Rarely can a response make something better. What makes something better is connection.”

— Dr. Brené Brown

The final ingredient of the Choose Love formula is Compassion in Action. Compassion in Action requires you to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. It is about trying to imagine what it would be like to think what they think, feel what they feel, and understand the world as they see it.

Empathy is a significant part of being compassionate. Empathy is the ability to identify and share another person’s emotions or “feeling with people.” We have to have awareness of other’s feelings, pain, and suffering before we can practice compassion. Empathy is different from sympathy. Sympathy is a feeling of
Choose Love for Caregivers
care and concern for someone and a hope to see them better off. Sympathy does not involve shared perspective or shared emotion.¹

**Brene Brown on Empathy vs. Sympathy Video: Brené Brown on Empathy**

(2:53 min) In this video Brene Brown differentiates empathy from sympathy.

In the previous video, Brene Brown discusses Teresa Wiseman’s research that states empathy requires³:

1) perspective-taking or seeing the world as others see it
2) being non-judgmental
3) recognizing emotion in others
4) being able to clearly communicate understanding

²[https://youtu.be/1Evwgu369lw](https://youtu.be/1Evwgu369lw)

**Empathy vs. Sympathy Activity:**

Sort empathetic vs. sympathetic responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Sympathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That must have been very difficult to share</td>
<td>Well, at least you still have: your health/other friends/etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am really glad you told me this</td>
<td>We can make this better we just have to cheer you up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like for me to sit here with you for a little while?</td>
<td>Let’s focus on something else to take your mind off of this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That sounds really awful. I don’t even know what to say right now. Would you like to talk about this some more?</td>
<td>Things will get better, I promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I get you a glass of water or a tissue?</td>
<td>But really, it is not that big of a deal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ultimately practicing compassion is all about paying attention to others. When we pay attention to others, we start to connect with others and can better understand them. We become aware of how they feel and see their strengths, challenges, pain, suffering, and sadness. This allows us to begin to have empathy and then compassion for others.

**Compassion Breath (1:21 min): [https://youtu.be/HLTYWjOSwE4](https://youtu.be/HLTYWjOSwE4)**

This instructional video demonstrates the use of the compassion breath to help us relax and plan how we will invite compassion into our hearts and feel it in our bodies.
1. Observe Others
- Step outside yourself.
- Shift your focus onto other people.
- Be curious about others.
- Watch others without labeling and judging them.

2. Be an Active Listener
- Slow down.
- Listen carefully and without interruption.
- Don’t rush to reply.
- Ask questions to understand better.
- Try to see and accept their perspective and opinion, even if yours is different.

3. Open Up
- Learn about others’ feelings and experiences.
- Be yourself.
- Share your feelings and experiences.
- Discover similarities, common ground, and connections

Page: Self-Care: Gratitude and Compassion for Ourselves

Self-Care: Gratitude and Compassion for Ourselves

Sometimes in our lives, we are so busy focusing on the world around us and the needs of those we care about, that we forget to be kind and considerate to ourselves. Feeling gratitude for yourself is not being arrogant or self-absorbed. It is about appreciating yourself. It is about appreciating the different parts of your brain that work together to help you think and be creative. It is about appreciating your emotions that help you make sense of your relationship and your connection to the world around you.

You are thoughtful, resilient, curious, and courageous.

Your existence matters deeply, and right now, in this moment, you are perfect just the way you are.

Gratitude for self
Choose Love for Caregivers

Self-care is one way to show gratitude to ourselves. One way to practice self-care is to treat your body with respect. We can do this by getting enough sleep, exercising, eating well, and making time to de-stress. Self-care is about balance and helps promote overall wellness so you can be the best version of yourself.

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion means showing compassion to yourself, especially when you are down, when you have failed, when you are feeling like you don’t measure up to those around you, or when you are suffering in some way. It means treating yourself with kindness. It means practicing self-love or caring about your own well-being and happiness. Having self-compassion and self-love helps us push through and overcome negative emotions and difficult situations to be confident and be able to be our best selves.

One way to practice self-compassion is by celebrating our successes and achievements, no matter how big or small they are. We might decide to keep a checklist, journal, or another visual way to track our progress and “victories” no matter how small they are. You may experience setbacks, have bad days, and make mistakes, but never lose sight of your successes and celebrate them every chance you get! This is a way to love and value yourself and show yourself compassion. Remember that connecting with others begins with your connection to yourself.

Page: Week 4: Practice & Share Compassion in Action

Select one of the items below to practice. Record the activity you selected and what you observed during the practice in your Implementation Guide. The Implementation Guide has been a tool for you to use throughout this course. Our hope is for this guide to help you discover what works best for you as you continue to learn, practice and apply these foundational concepts into your life. Teaching these skills through modeling and guiding children and youth in your care.

Please remember to access the Choose Love website for additional learning and community.

Remember, courage is the foundation for choosing love, and it takes courage to try something new and share your experiences with others!

- **Rest and Relax Activity** Slideshow with two rest and relax activities to try. Each activity will take 2 minutes to complete.
- **Focused Awareness Activities**: Slideshow with a focused awareness activity for you to try. This activity is just under 1 minute to complete.
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- **Compassionate Listening Exercise (pdf):**
  https://community.granite.edu/pluginfile.php/227201/mod_page/content/7/Compassionate%20Listening%20Exercise.pdf

Consider how you feel after completing these activities. As you refer to your Implementation Guide, think about how you might see yourself using these strategies with a child/youth in your care.

**Page: Closing Comments**

As human beings, we may consider what our legacy or impact on the world may be. Hopefully, we strive to leave a positive lasting impression. You may have decided to become a caregiver to children and youth because you desire to make a positive difference in their lives. As a caregiver, we can also think about how we can support children and youth in setting their own goals and helping them to visualize their fullest potential. Recall our discussions around post-traumatic growth from Module 1, that individuals can find meaning and purpose as they work through their pain and suffering. By using the pieces of the Choose Love formula: courage + gratitude + forgiveness + compassion in action = Choose Love, we can empower children and youth to understand their own value and capabilities.

Although this course is coming to a close, the work of “Choosing Love” is just beginning! We hope that you can take the Choose Love formula to incorporate in your lives and with the children and youth in your care. You are encouraged to explore the Choose Love website: https://chooselovemovement.org/home/ further and you may want to access the Choose Love for Home program for self-guided videos, activities, and discussion topics. This could be a great way to introduce Choose Love with the children and youth in your care. You will be able to create a free account and have access to programs, extension programs, and additional resources all available to you cost-free!

**Shannon Desilets is the Program Director of the Choose Love Movement with the State of NH. For information regarding this initiative, you may reach her at Shannon.m.desilets@nh.gov**

Extension programs include:

- **All Calm Down:** A series of healing meditation videos developed in conjunction with Dr. Bruce H. Lipton, PhD., world-famous cell biologist and author.
- **Compassionate Touch:** This program explores ways of teaching children and educators how to recognize and use touch that is nurturing and helpful, and how to avoid touch that isn’t.
- **Grow & Guide:** Making the neuroscience of the brain fun to learn and easy to understand.
- **Healthy Grieving:** We have partnered with Dianne Gray, President of Hospice & Healthcare Communications and Board Member of the Elisabeth Kubler Ross Foundation, to create the Healthy Grieving Extension Program. Grieving is a normal part of life and we hope to demystify this process and take away the fear that is facilitated by our misunderstanding
- **Tapping for Stress Relief:** With "Tapping for Stress Relief in Classrooms," you will learn how to use this self-regulating tool to develop an understanding of emotions and build resiliency to take part in controlling them.
- **Zensational Kids:** Yoga and mindfulness practices to help students self-regulate, manage big emotions, focus their attention, and develop resilience.
Activities

Activity – Participate in 90 minute Zoom session.

1st Activity:

Week 4 Discussion 1: PRACTICE & SHARE Forgiveness (from Week 3)

DIRECTIONS: (1) Respond to your instructor’s question(s) below by end of week.

Select ONE of the Gratitude Practices shared last week.

1. What practice did you select?
2. What worked and/or did not work for you? Please describe any insights you learned while practicing.
3. Do you think you will try this practice again? If not, is there another practice you are interested in?

Remember courage is the foundation for choosing love, and it takes courage to try something new and share your experiences with others!

2nd Activity:

Week 4 Discussion 2: Responding with Empathy

DIRECTIONS: (1) Respond to your instructor’s question(s) below by midweek. (2) Comment on a minimum of ONE other posts by Friday.

Think about the last time someone came to you with a problem, challenge, or was in a difficult place within their lives. This could be a child or youth in your care or any other family, friend, colleague. Think about how you responded, and if it was empathetic or sympathetic response.

If a child/youth in your care shares with you their past experiences and discusses their trauma, how can you respond with empathy?

3rd Activity

Week 4 Final Reflection Discussion

DIRECTIONS: (1) Respond to your instructor’s question(s) below by midweek. (2) View all other comments by end of week.
Choose Love for Caregivers
What has been the most impactful part of this course for you? How might you continue to apply the ideas you have learned and practiced over the past 4 weeks now that the course is complete?