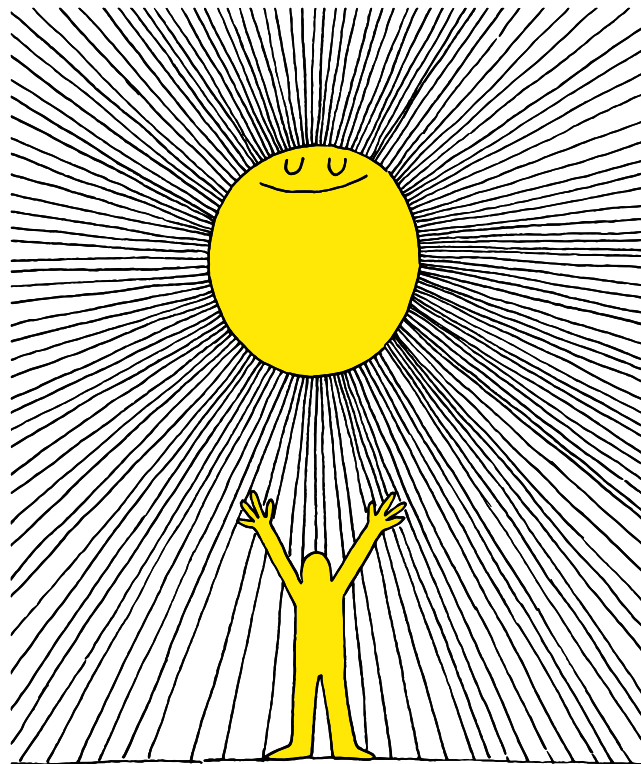


**WELL-BEING CANADA CURRICULUM**  
**Introduction to**  
**Well-being**



**KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3**

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**Lessons 1 to 4**

THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE

# WELL- BEING CANADA



**Well-being Canada is an educational program that uses evidence-based tools, resources and everyday actions to nurture and promote positive well-being in students of all ages.**

**This resource is focused on supporting K-3 level build the foundation of social-emotional learning and support educators in the integration of well-being into your classrooms.**

**The collection of 15 lessons is easy to use, classroom friendly and provide tools and activities to nurture well-being in your students.**

# Let's Get Started



## **LESSON 1**

---

THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE



## Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the Well-being Canada program. During this introduction, students are engaged in an active discussion about the meaning and importance of well-being. The concepts introduced here will help develop students' interest and engagement with Well-being Canada.

### Objectives:

- Students investigate and learn about well-being.
- Students consider a definition of well-being that is personally meaningful.
- Students apply their new learning about well-being to their actions and experiences in daily life.

### Estimated Time:

40 to 45 minutes

### Materials:

Dictionaries or computers (optional); chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard [You may wish to give students a journal, folder or duotang to keep their reflections and related work on well-being.]

### Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



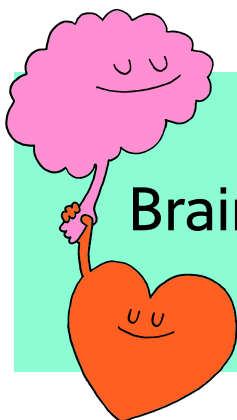
REFLECTION SKILLS



SELF-CARE SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS



## Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

# Part 1: Investigate and Learn (20 minutes)

## Step 1: Introduce the Topic— What Is Well-being?

**Overview:** Using the following guiding questions, lead the class in a discussion about the concept of well-being. Invite student ideas and write them on the board.

**Note:** These questions help students access their previous knowledge about the subject.

- Welcome to Well-being Canada! Today, we're going to begin by talking about well-being. Think about any questions you might have.
- Use the following guiding questions to engage students' curiosity about well-being:
  - Have you heard the term "well-being" before?
  - What do you think it is?
  - Where have you heard about it?
- If students struggle with the term "well-being", you might start by asking them what "healthy" means and transition to discussing the elements of a healthy body and a healthy mind.
- Prompt students to consider feelings, mood, how we learn, how we treat others, how we know when we need food, water, bathroom breaks or rest, how we feel when/after we play, etc.
- As a group, invite students to share their thoughts about well-being.
- Write their ideas and questions on the board. For students who are developing readers, you may opt to use symbols to indicate different factors of well-being (for example, a happy face, apple, ZZZs, a heart, etc.).

## Step 2: Learn

Now, provide the following definition:

- The Oxford Dictionary describes well-being as: "[The state of] being comfortable, healthy or happy." Write the definition on the board or display it digitally. Next, create a chart and invite students to share their ideas about what well-being looks, sounds and feels like (you may use symbols on the chart [eye, ear and heart] to help students to identify each category):
  - What does well-being look like? Direct students to the following ideas: people smiling, people looking happy together, playing and learning well together, people doing the things they like to do, etc.
  - What does well-being sound like? Direct students to the following ideas: people saying nice things about each other and about themselves, laughter, working together, expressing their feelings, calm, etc.
  - What does well-being feel like? Direct students to the following ideas: calm, happy, warm, safe to be yourself, comfortable expressing your feelings, knowing someone will help you if you feel sad, well-rested, etc.
- Lastly, unpack the definition a little more to ensure comprehension.
  - Having mental well-being means that you are able to manage difficult feelings. When we can manage our difficult feelings, we can do our best and help each other.
  - What are the things that help us when we are having difficult feelings? (Direct students to answers like: talking to someone they trust, expressing the emotions (crying it out), drawing a picture or writing a story to express how they feel, doing something that makes them happy like playing outside or watching a funny show.)
  - Why is it important to do these things?

- Next, have students think about how their actions impact their well-being.
- Do you think there are ways to increase well-being?
- Invite student ideas. Select from the following list to offer some concrete examples:
  - Getting enough sleep so that you are rested and energized each day.
  - Eating healthy food so that your body feels good, grows and has energy.
  - Friendships that help you feel happy and cared for, and being a good friend to others to help them feel cared for!
  - Knowing who you can go to when you have a big problem to solve; important adults in your life who you know will help you when you need it.
  - Being active! Exercising helps make your body stronger and your brain feel calmer and happier.



## Part 2: Application (20–25 minutes)

### Step 1: Our Understanding of Well-being

**Overview:** Invite students to think together to create a shared definition of well-being that you can all refer to as a class.

For example, "Well-being is feeling calm, being a good friend and taking care of yourself."

### Step 2: Make Connections

Invite students to express themselves artistically with the following prompt. They may choose to write, draw, sculpt with playdough or use whichever materials are available to them:

- What does well-being look like for me?

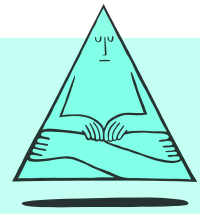
### Step 3: Summary

- Invite students to share their ideas from the artistic prompt, either as a whole class or in small groups or pairs.

- Ask students if there is any information about well-being that you missed and if they have any questions.

**Optional:** Create a gallery walk so that students can view one another's interpretations of well-being.

### Optional Deeper Dive



For a deeper dive, you may provide each student with a copy of the Well-being and Me worksheet (found on pages 8-9) and invite them to complete it.

Students may write or draw about what well-being means for them, based on the following prompts. For you, what does well-being:

- Look like?
- Sound like?
- Feel like?



### Rest Up!

Rest refuels your brain and its ability to focus. It also boosts your ability to get up and go! Research shows that rest makes us more productive and creative and gives us more energy. Did you know that your brain is active, even when you are resting?

# Teaching to Diversity

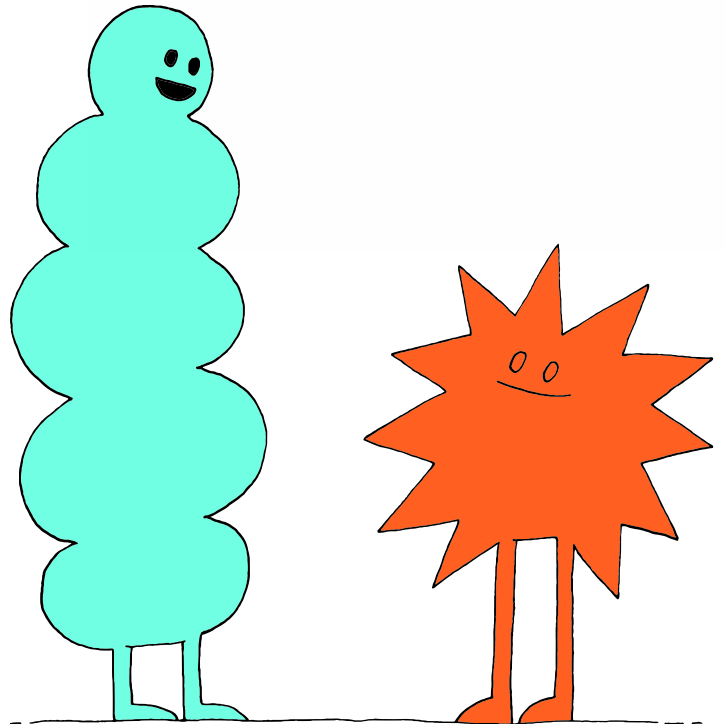
**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

## Differentiation

- Break this lesson up into two lessons, in order to give students more of a chance to process and absorb each abstract concept.
- Provide additional concrete examples of well-being. Sometimes providing examples of the opposite of each concept helps to give more context.
- Select one of the picture books found in the book list to initiate a discussion about well-being.

## Challengers

- When introducing well-being, ask students to look up a definition online or in the dictionary.
- Include a Think-Pair-Share activity where students discuss what well-being looks/sounds/feels like with a partner or small group.
- Create a shared class Word Web about well-being.
- Journal Exercise
  - Write about a time you thought you were experiencing well-being. What were you doing?
  - What emotions were you experiencing? What was impacting how you were feeling?





## Well-being Book List

### Picture Books

*Zen Shorts*, Jon J. Muth

(also supports mindfulness)

*A Pebble for Your Pocket: Mindful Stories for Children and Grown-ups*, Thich Nhat Hanh

(also supports mindfulness)

*Little You*, Richard Van Camp

*Fatty Legs*, Christy Jordon-Fenton

(also supports resilience)

*You Hold Me UP*, Monique Gray Smith

(also supports empathy, compassion and resilience)

### Instructional/Guide Books

*Just Breathe*, Mallika Chopra

(also supports setting intentions and mindfulness)

### Chapter Books

*Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry

(also supports empathy and compassion)

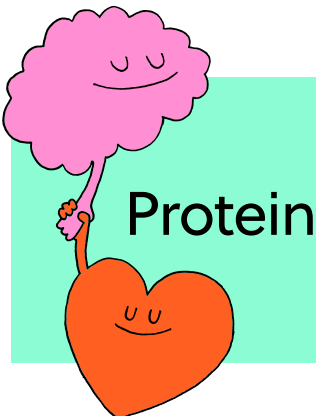
*A Long Walk to Water*, Linda Sue Park

*Refugee*, Alan Gratz

(also supports resilience)

*George*, Alex Gino

(also supports empathy, compassion and resilience)



The body does not store protein, so everyone should eat protein at breakfast, lunch and dinner for a steady supply. Protein sources often have calcium and iron, which are key for growing bodies! What foods do you know that have protein?

## Well-being Word Web



## Well-being and Me

Write or draw your ideas about what well-being means for you in each square.

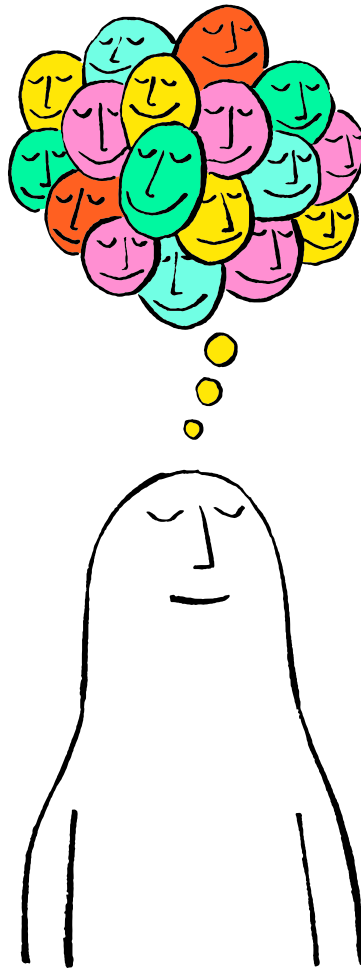
**Well-being IS:**

**Well-being LOOKS Like:**

**Well-being SOUNDS Like:**

**Well-being FEELS Like:**

# The Road to Mindfulness



## **LESSON 2**

---

THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE



## Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the practice of mindfulness, a tool to promote well-being. Understanding and practising mindfulness will help support students with understanding and managing their emotions and with participation in experiential learning in the forthcoming lessons.

### Objectives:

- Students investigate and learn about mindfulness.
- Students are invited to participate in experiential learning via short guided mindful awareness practices.

### Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



REFLECTION SKILLS



SELF-CARE SKILLS



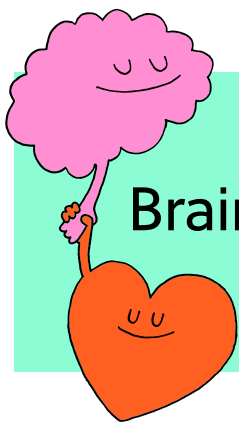
SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS

### Estimated Time:

40 to 45 minutes

### Materials:

Dictionaries or computers; small pieces of food (for example, raisins, grapes, berries, chocolate pieces); chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard, SMARTboard, journals



## Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

## Part 1: Investigate and Learn (20 minutes)

### Step 1: Introduce the Topic— What Is Mindfulness?

**Overview:** Introduce students to the concept of mindfulness. Use the following points as a guideline.

**Note:** These questions help students access their previous knowledge about the subject.

- Now we are going to learn about something that can help our well-being: it's called mindfulness.
- Has anyone heard of that word before? Invite student ideas.
- Write the definition on the board:
  - Mindfulness means to pay attention to what is happening in the moment, without judgment.
  - Alternatively, for younger students you may use this definition from kidshealth.org: Mindfulness means paying full attention to something. It means slowing down to really notice what you're doing. Being mindful is the opposite of rushing or multitasking. When you're mindful, you're taking your time. You're focusing in a relaxed, easy way.
- You may invite students to Think-Pair-Share for a few minutes about how they interpret the definition. Then, invite students to share their thoughts as a class. Next, unpack the definition of mindfulness.
- What does it mean to pay attention to what is happening in the moment?
  - It simply means to notice what is happening here and now.
  - What do you notice—what do you hear, see, feel?
- What do you think "without judgment" means? Invite student ideas.
- Without judgment, or sometimes it's called nonjudgment, means that you are not deciding whether something is good or bad, you are just noticing that it is there. What would that look like?
  - Provide examples like: Someone gives you something to taste that you have not tried before. What would it be like to taste this new food without judgment? Invite student ideas.
  - It would mean keeping an open mind and not deciding whether you will like it based on how it looks.
- Being mindful is a bit like being a scientist! Scientists are interested and curious about learning and understanding. In order to understand something, scientists focus their attention on what they are studying. Could you be curious like a scientist?
- When we're mindful we can help our well-being. How and why?
- Offer an opportunity for students to share mindfulness practices they or people they know have participated in.
- Next, invite students to participate in the mindful tasting activity on the next page or choose from the list of additional mindful awareness practices found on page 16 of this lesson.

## Part 2: Application (20–25 minutes)

### Step 1: Tasting with Mindfulness

**Objective:** *This is an experiential activity that serves to introduce students to mindfulness. Note that this is an optional activity and should be presented as an invitation to students, not a requirement. You may also select an alternative mindful awareness activity to try (see page 5).*

Lead the activity with the following script:

- Take your small item of food into your hand.
- Just begin by looking at it ... notice all of the different things you can see.
- Notice if you find yourself thinking you like or don't like something about it.
- If you notice judgment creeping, likes or don't likes, just notice that and try to keep the judgement away.
- Can you simply notice this small piece of food? Can you be curious about it?
- Now, bring the food to your nose and smell.
- Again, smell to be curious, not to decide if you like or dislike it.
- Next, place the food in your mouth.
- Don't bite it just yet.
- Notice the texture ... is it rough? Smooth?
- Notice if you can taste anything now without biting it.
- Now, gently bite your piece of food.
- Notice what it tastes like.
- Slowly eat your small piece of food.
- Before we move on, think about all of the people who helped to bring this small piece of food to you—from farmers and food delivery truck drivers to grocery store workers... If you can, send a little "thank you" out to those people in your thoughts.

- To close the activity, ask for students' reactions to the activity.
- How do you feel after trying this mindfulness activity? What did you notice?

**Optional:** As an additional challenge, invite students to do a three to four minute free write or draw about the smell, texture and flavour of their food.

### Step 2: Introduce Deep Belly Breathing

**Overview:** *The purpose of the following activity is to introduce students to a breathing practice that can help foster mindfulness, attention and stress management.*

**Note:** It is important that this is presented as an invitation (optional). Students who have experienced trauma may be resistant; in these cases, offer modifications such as not closing eyes, standing or not participating and doing an alternative quiet activity.

Use the following script to lead the breathing practice:

- Now, we're going to try a very short exercise that will help us to be mindful and also can be helpful in calming our bodies and minds. (If appropriate, ask students to think of examples of when they might want to calm their bodies and minds.)
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap. (Alternate: First, find a comfortable seat on the carpet. Rest your hands on your lap.)
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or the floor).
- Now, just begin by noticing any sounds that are here in this room now.
- No need to do anything but notice what you hear.

- Now, see if you can focus on your breathing. Notice that you're breathing now.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- Next, we're going to try taking slow breaths in and out...
- Now, take a slow breath in...
- And then, slowly let your breath out through your mouth.
- Let's try that again.
- Try taking two more deep breaths in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth. See if you can notice your breath filling up your belly...
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.

#### Next, debrief the breathing activity.

- What did you notice? Give students the key message:
  - By focusing our attention on our breathing, we can calm our mind and body. With a calm mind and body, we can make better choices.

## Additional Mindful Awareness Practices

### Mindful Movement

Invite students to take a few moments for a mindful stretch. This is a very good transition activity or gentle energizer after periods of sitting. Invite students to stand with enough room to stretch their arms out wide without touching another student.

- Stretch tall as a tree! Notice how it feels in your arms and sides as you reach for the sky!
- Reach for your toes!
- Arms out wide!
- Arms overhead and gently bring your arms over to your right side; notice how it feels on your left side; next switch and bring your arms over to your left side; notice how it feels on your right side.

- Mountain: Stand still like a mountain. Notice your feet rooted to the ground and your body standing tall and still like a mountain.

### Mindful Walking

Invite students to walk around the outside of the classroom (space permitting), in the gym or take them outside.

- Invite students to focus their attention on the sensations of walking.
- Can you notice the sensation of your feet touching the ground?
- Can you notice the sensation of your legs moving?
- Try walking very slowly; then trying speeding up the pace!
- What do you notice about the sensations of different speeds?

### Mindful in Nature

Invite students to go on a guided nature walk.

- What do you see, hear and smell?

### Mindful Art

During art, invite students to take a mindful approach. What do you see and feel as you focus your attention on your artistic creation?

### Mindful Communication

During class discussions, group and partner work, invite students to practice mindful listening and speaking.

- When listening, try to focus all of your attention on those who are speaking.
- When speaking, focus your attention on the listener (eye contact), so that you make a connection each moment that you share your ideas and thoughts. Then, check that your listener understands what you wanted to share.



# Teaching to Diversity

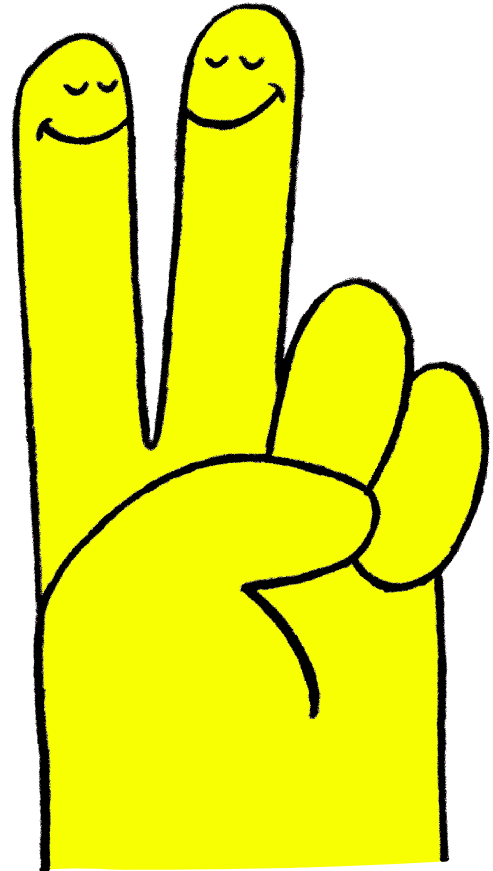
**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

## Differentiation

- Break this lesson up into two lessons (Part 1: Investigate and Learn and Part 2: Application), in order to give students more of a chance to process and absorb each concept and practice.
- Provide additional concrete examples of mindfulness. Sometimes providing examples of the opposite of each concept helps to give more context.
- Start with movement practices to invite students to practice mindful awareness.
- Use one of the suggested picture books about mindfulness to help introduce the concept.

## Challengers

- Add a written component to Think-Pair-Share activities by having students write down their ideas.
  - Journal Exercise: Write about a time you thought you were mindful. What were you doing? What emotions were you experiencing? Why were you feeling that way?



## **Mindfulness Book List**

### **Picture Books**

*A Pebble for Your Pocket: Mindful Stories for Children and Grown-ups*, Thich Nhat Hanh  
(also supports mindfulness)

*Listening to My Body*, Gabi Garcia  
(also supports resiliency)

*Zen Shorts*, Jon J. Muth  
(also supports well-being)

*A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles*, Thich Nhat Hanh

*Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda*, Laura Alderfer

*What Does It Mean to Be Present?* Rana Di Orio

*Shi-shi-etko*, Nicola I. Campbell  
(also supports resiliency)

### **Instructional/Guide Books**

*Breathe Like a Bear*, Kira Willey

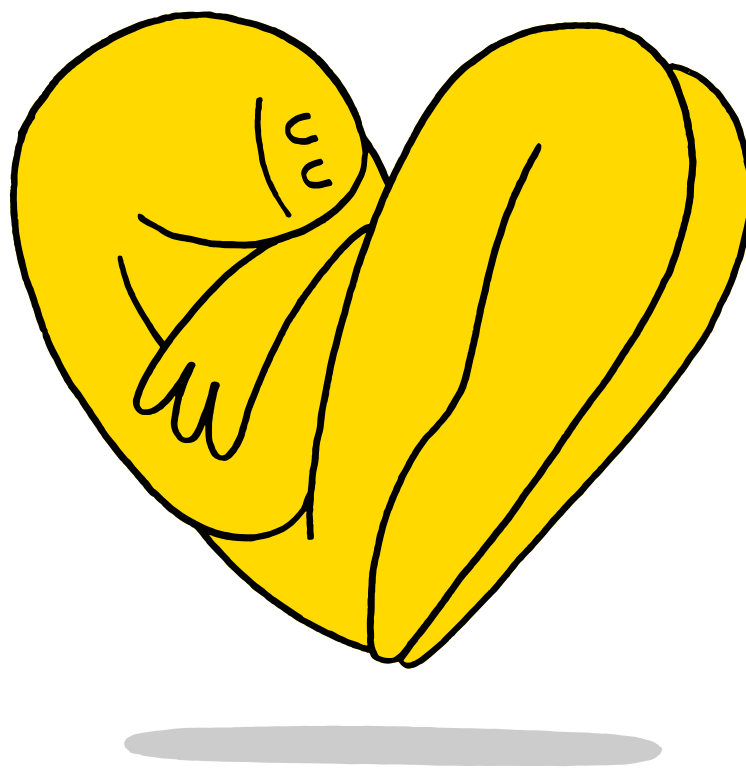
*Just Breathe*, Mallika Chopra  
(also supports well-being and setting intentions)

### **Chapter Books**

*Timmy's Monster Diary: Screen Time Stress*, Raul Melmed and Anette Sexton

*The Universe Versus Alex Woods*, Gavin Extence

# Understanding Our Feelings



## LESSON 3

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THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE



## Purpose

Students are introduced to the concept of emotional response. Students are invited to think critically about how certain experiences result in different body sensations and emotional responses.

### Objectives:

- Students participate in a short mindful awareness practice.
- Students investigate and learn about emotions and emotional response.
- Students reflect on how certain emotions show up for them through body sensations.

### Estimated Time:

40 to 45 minutes

### Materials:

Dictionaries or computers (optional); chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard

### Skills Learned:



CRITICAL  
THINKING



COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS



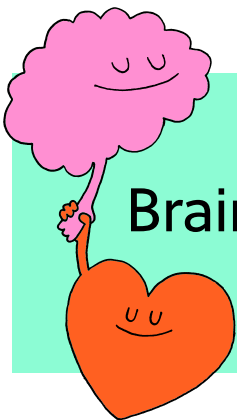
REFLECTION  
SKILLS



SELF-CARE  
SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS  
SKILLS



## Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

## Part 1: Review (5 minutes)

### Step 1: Review and Introduction— What Is Well-being and What Is Mindfulness?

**Overview:** Review the concepts and practices discussed in Lesson 2 in order to lay the foundation for reflecting on our emotions.

- Today, we're going to begin by reviewing what we discussed and learned about well-being and mindfulness in the last lesson.

Pair students together and have them re-tell their definitions of well-being and mindfulness to each other or recall the definitions together as a class.

### Step 2: Mindfulness Practice (optional)

Use the following script to lead the breathing practice.

- Now, we're going practice mindful breathing, as we learned in our last lesson.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap.
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or table).
- Now, just begin by noticing any sounds that are here in this room.

- No need to do anything but notice what you hear.
- Now, see if you can turn your attention to your breath. Notice that you're breathing now.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- Next, we're going to try taking slow breaths in and out...
- Now, take a slow breath in...
- And then, slowly let your breath out through your mouth.
- Let's try that again.
- At your own pace, take two more deep breaths in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.

### Step 3: Today's Topic

Introduce today's topic of understanding our feelings and let students know that this is another practice that contributes to well-being.

# Part 2: Our Feelings; Investigate and Learn

## (25 minutes)

**Overview:** *This portion of the lesson introduces students to the idea of understanding emotions and invites students to identify a variety of different emotions and the different ways that one might express each emotion.*

### Step 1: How Am I Feeling Today?

- First, ask students to reflect on how they are feeling today. Let students know that there are a lot of things that can affect how someone is feeling at any time. You may ask students to share what they think can affect their feelings and direct them toward the following responses:
  - The weather
  - If you had a good night's sleep
  - The people you are with
  - Whether or not you're hungry
  - What activities you've been doing
- Select one of the following ways to invite students to reflect on how they are feeling:
  - Free writing or journaling
  - Pair and share (if appropriate and students are comfortable sharing)
  - Free drawing
  - Using colours: Have a number of coloured paints available. Have each student dip their thumb into the colour that represents how they are feeling that day and stamp their thumbprint onto a piece of chart paper (you could even draw a tree trunk and have each thumbprint represent a leaf on the tree, for example).

- If you choose to have students share their feelings out loud or visually, encourage students to notice some of the differences in how everyone is feeling.
  - Why is it important to understand that someone may be feeling different than how we are feeling?

### Step 2: Story Time

- Ask the class to hold onto their thoughts about how they are feeling as we move into a story. You may have a story (or video clip) in mind or you can refer to "Listening to my Body" by Gabi Garcia which you can read-aloud [here](#). (Any story or video that addresses the variety of ways that one feels and expresses feeling is suitable for this segment.)
- Invite students to think back to how they were feeling prior to the story:
  - Did they connect with any of the feelings in the story?

## Part 3: Our Feelings; Looking Closer (15 minutes)

**Overview:** This portion of the lesson encourages students to identify as many feelings as they can think of and to reflect on how those feelings show up for them in the way of thoughts and body sensations. This awareness and understanding of how feelings manifest will set up the next lesson on emotion management.

### Step 1: Naming Our Feelings

- First, ask students to list as many feelings/emotions as they can think of. Write these on the board.
- Next, choose three to five different emotions from the list to focus on. Try to represent a variety of emotions and to select the ones that seem the most representative of the class (example: happy, sad, frustrated, worried, excited, angry, etc.)
- Create a chart with two segments: Feeling and Body.\* (\*As a deeper dive, you may add a third column: Thoughts). List the three to five emotions in the "Feeling" column. You may opt to write them in different colours or to use symbols with them for developing readers.
- Exploring each emotion one-by-one, ask students to think about how that emotion might feel in their body. Prompt them to consider body temperature, heart rate, tension, speed, energy level, how their face and hands feel, etc. Record these feelings in the chart.
- As an extra challenge, you may ask students to reflect on what thoughts they might have during each emotion and record these in the chart.

Feeling	Body	Thoughts
Sad	Slow, tired Crying	Why did that happen?

- Make sure to address that not everyone has the same physical sensations or thoughts when experiencing a certain feeling.
- Ask students:
  - Why is it important to know that other people might experience feelings in a different way than we experience them?
  - How could it be helpful to understand how feelings show up in our bodies (and thoughts)?
- Tell the class that next time, we will explore different ways to manage our emotions, which can be good for our well-being.

# Teaching to Diversity

**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

## Differentiation

- You may find additional stories or movie clips to have students investigate how body sensations manifest with different emotions.

## Challengers

- Invite students to independently make a chart of Feelings/Body/Thoughts to encourage deep personal reflection.
- Think about the literature you have read recently. Is there a moment where a character was experiencing a big feeling? How did the author describe how that feeling felt for the character? What was the character thinking?



## Healthy Habits

When you practice habits that nurture your health, you strengthen the connections in your brain. This means that you can actually train your brain to think positive thoughts and keep up healthy habits!



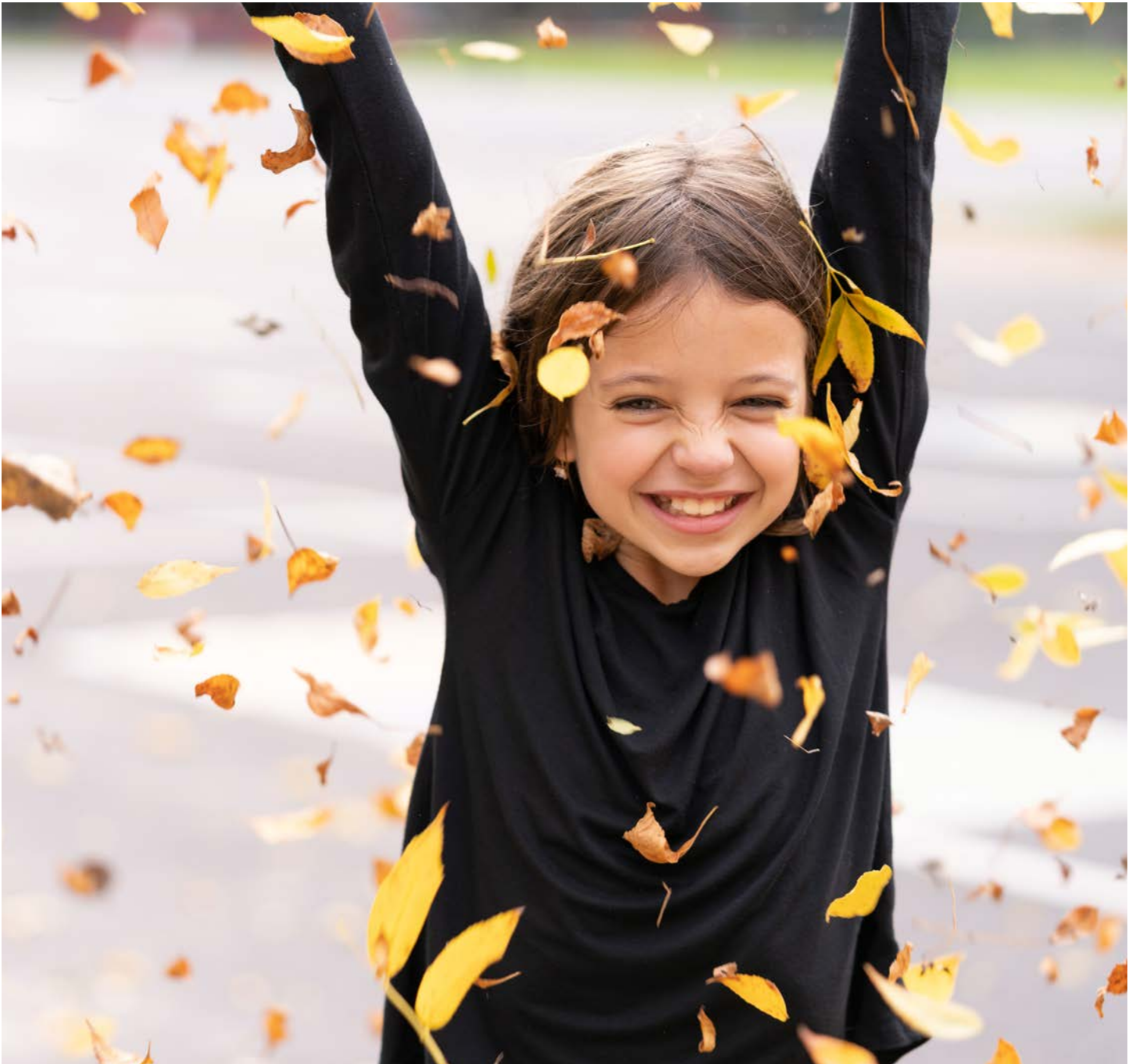
## Feelings Book List

### Picture Books

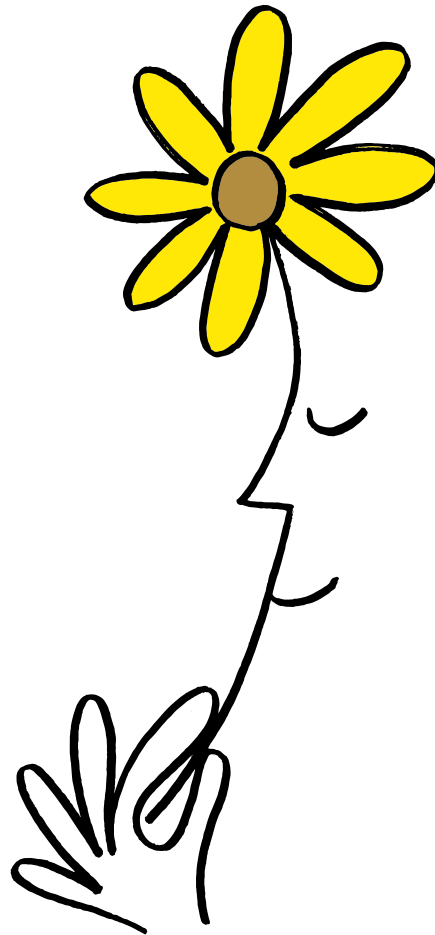
*My Many Colored Days*, Dr. Seuss

*The Feeling Flower*, Lean Dakroub

*Listening to My Body*, Gabi Garcia



# Managing Our Emotions



## **LESSON 4**

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THE ROAD TO POSITIVE WELL-BEING IN EVERY CLASSROOM STARTS HERE



## Purpose

Students continue to explore the concept of emotional response. Students develop an understanding of how to manage emotional response to promote their well-being.

### Objectives:

- Students review their understanding of how emotions manifest through body sensation (and thoughts).
- Students explore a variety of strategies to manage emotional responses.
- Students consider how they could personally manage their emotions using one or more of the strategies discussed as a class.

### Estimated Time:

40 minutes

### Materials:

Chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard

### Skills Learned:



CRITICAL THINKING



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



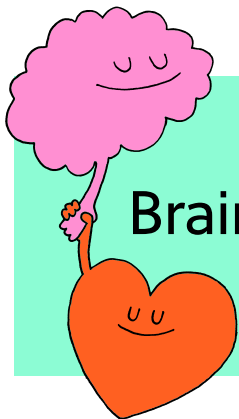
REFLECTION SKILLS



SELF-CARE SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS SKILLS



## Brain Bites

What's good for the body is good for the brain. What's good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.

## Part 1: Review (20 minutes)

### Step 1: Short Mindfulness Practice (optional)

Use the following script to lead a mindful moment and visualization.

- We'll begin with a short mindful moment.
- We will also take a few moments to reflect on what is most important to you.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap.
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or table).
- Let's take a few mindful breaths together.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- Next, we're going to try taking slow breaths in and out...
- Now, take a slow breath in...
- And then, slowly let your breath out through your mouth.
- Let's try that again.
- Now, I want you to picture the school year ahead...
- Think about what matters most to you...
- What brings you joy?
- Is it friends? Family?
- Is it being active in sport or learning new things?
- Take a moment and imagine yourself as you wish to see yourself this school year.
- What are you doing when you are your truest, best self?
- What does it look like, sound like, feel like?
- Take one more moment and hold that image of yourself in your mind.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.

### Step 2: How Am I Feeling Today?

**Overview:** This portion of the lesson introduces students to the idea of understanding emotions and invites students to identify a variety of different emotions and the different ways that one might express each emotion.

- First, ask students to reflect on how they are feeling today. Remind students that there are a lot of things that can affect how someone is feeling at any time. You may ask students to share what they think can affect their feelings and direct them toward the following responses:
  - The weather
  - If you had a good night's sleep
  - The people you are with
  - Whether or not you're hungry
  - What activities you've been doing
- Select one of the following ways to invite students to reflect on how they are feeling:
  - Free writing or journaling
  - Pair and share (if appropriate and students are comfortable sharing)
  - Free drawing
  - Using colours: you may have a number of coloured paints available and have each student dip their thumb into the colour that represents how they are feeling that day and stamp their thumbprint onto a piece of chart paper (you could even draw a tree trunk and have each thumbprint represent a leaf on the tree, for example)
- Next, challenge students to consider the body sensations they are experiencing, if any, based on how they are feeling. Encourage students to record this, either in words or by drawing a picture of how it feels. You may reference the chart from the previous lesson outlining the variety of body sensations one might feel.

# Part 2: Managing Difficult Feelings—Plan

(25 minutes)

**Overview:** Students will reflect on the importance of awareness when it comes to recognizing their feelings and how their feelings show up. Students will consider how to manage difficult feelings and how emotion management might be connected to their well-being.

## Step 1: Review Feelings Reflection

- Briefly invite students to share their feeling reflection with the class, a small group or a partner if they feel comfortable.
- Ask students to think about why it might be important to reflect on their feelings: “Why is it good for us to understand our feelings and how it makes our bodies feel?”
- Invite students to share their thoughts and note them down on the board.
- Let students know that research shows that naming our feelings and understanding how our feelings show up in our bodies can help us understand why we might be feeling that way, so we can find a way to feel better.
  - For example, if I start to feel upset, I might say “**I am angry right now**” and I might think, “**Hmm, when I’m angry, my face feels hot and my fists get tight and I feel like yelling!**”
  - When I do this, it helps me remember that I won’t stay angry forever and can help me understand why I am upset so I can handle the problem, instead of just feeling angry.

## Step 2: Story: Wilma Jean Worry Machine (optional)

- Ask the class to hold onto their thoughts about understanding our feelings as we move into a story. You may have a story (or video clip) in mind or you can refer to *Wilma Jean the Worry Machine* by Julia Cook, which you can find as a read-aloud [here](#). (Any story or video that addresses managing difficult emotions is suitable for this segment.)
- Invite students to reflect on the story:
  - What did you think of the story?
  - What are some of the things Wilma Jean was worried about?
  - At the beginning of the story, she says she doesn’t want to go to school because she thinks she has the “worry flu.” Have you ever felt that way? What did it feel like?
  - What helped Wilma Jean in the story?
  - What happened when Wilma Jean shared her worries with her teacher?

When Wilma Jean wrote down her worries, her teacher helped her think of some ways to help, didn’t she? We can control **SOME** of our worries, but not all of them.

Telling someone we care for and trust about the things that worry or upset us can help us come up with ways to make us feel better.

### Step 3: Stress and Other Difficult Emotions

- Share the following definition of stress (from kidshealth.org) with the class: Stress is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something.
  - Remind students that, just like how we all experience feelings a little bit differently, we might feel different when we are stressed, upset or worried.
  - Ask students if they can think of a scenario when “worry” might actually be a good thing. Have students share their thoughts out loud or with a partner.
  - Sometimes, worry is good because it helps us remember to do the important things we need to do, like remembering to feed a pet. But sometimes this worry in our minds can make our bodies feel bad. You may feel angry, frustrated, scared or afraid—which can give you a stomachache or a headache.
  - The stress part of our brain gets turned on whenever we sense a problem.
  - Let students know that the tricky thing about the stress part of our brain is that it gets turned on whether the problem is big or small, so we can sometimes get stressed out by things that don’t seem like very big problems at all.
- Understanding how we feel can help us to manage our reactions and to make sure we don’t do or say something to make ourselves even more upset or stressed out!
  - Invite students to reflect on the following question and to answer it by free writing, drawing or sharing out loud:
    - What helps you and makes you feel more comfortable when you are stressed, upset or worried?
    - Maybe you have a special stuffed animal or toy that you like to play with, maybe you like to go and run around outside or maybe you need to snuggle with someone you love!
    - This can include people, toys, activities, snacks, characters from movies and books, stories; anything that feels good for you belongs in your toolbox!
  - Remind students that everyone has their own special tools to help them! When we know what special tools work for us, it can help us to calm down when we are feeling stressed, worried or upset.



## Endorphins

Endorphins are “feel good” neurotransmitters that are released when a person gets hurt, but also during exercise or laughter. In addition to blocking pain, endorphins can make people happy. Try going for a walk or reading a funny story and notice how it makes you feel!

# Teaching to Diversity

**Optional:** Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

## Differentiation

- If the concept of stress or difficult emotions is new to students, you may spend additional time investigating a variety of scenarios where a student might find themselves feeling worried, stressed or frustrated.
- For writing activities, allow students to list ideas in lieu of full sentences or eliminate the writing tasks and have reflections be oral with a partner.
- Provide a copy of written definitions for students to reference during reflection/planning tasks.

## Challengers

- Stop partway through the story Wilma Jean the Worry Machine to see if students can think of some strategies to help Wilma Jean manage her worries.
- As a class, brainstorm some guidelines or some motivational quotes to display in the classroom to help orient students toward emotion awareness and management during moments when they may encounter difficult emotions.



## Dopamine

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter involved in the brain's pleasure-and-reward system. It helps regulate movement, emotional responses, attention and learning. Some activities that produce dopamine in the brain include movement, laughter, playing an instrument or doing something creative, taking a bath or having a good conversation!

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BEING  
CANADA**



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