

Pearl River School District

Clinician Newsletter

Winter 2022



School Psychologists	School Social Workers
Miguel Arias PRMS ariasm@pearlriver.org	Eric Borcharding Evans Park/Lincoln borcherdinge@pearlriver.org
James Calisi PRMS calisij@pearlriver.org	Jessica Bersani PRMS bersanij@pearlriver.org
Krystina Kane Evans Park KaneK@pearlriver.org	Natalie Cervantes-Libassi Franklin cervantes-libassin@pearlriver.org
Jamie Martens PRHS martensj@pearlriver.org	Norma Canals PRHS canalsn@pearlriver.org
Dr. Rebecca Massa Lincoln massar@pearlriver.org	
Ellen McCabe Franklin - CPSE mccabee@pearlriver.org	
Matthew Schultz PRHS schultzm@pearlriver.org	
Dr. Samantha Turco PRHS turcos@pearlriver.org	

The holiday season is upon us which can bring up a mix of emotions.

It's the time of year when we are encouraged to sit back and reflect on all the things that we are thankful for. This practice - which is helpful during the other 11 months of the year as well - can have so many benefits for our mental, emotional and physical health.

Gratitude is good for all of us - and when we include it into our lessons and routines, we can help ourselves and others to develop habits of *appreciation* that they can take with them throughout our lives.

Tips for the Holiday Season

- Reflect on what is important to you during the holidays
- Make a plan as early as possible about what you will do during the holidays
- Communicate clearly how others can assist or support you
- Realize the holiday season is a marathon, not a sprint
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Reflect on what went well this holiday season and improvements you would like to make for next year
- Manage your spending
- Think ahead about stories or observations from the past as a family that you'd like to share

Research shows students who receive social-emotional interventions early and throughout their learning careers demonstrate impressive and measurable benefits later on in life. They learn to manage their emotions, cope with stress, and set positive goals. *Casel.org*

November & December SEL constructs:

Gratitude: Generosity, School Community, Conflict Resolution

Kindness: Friendship, Sharing, Empathy

Students Are Working On :

1. Identifying their emotions including examples of when they felt that way.
2. Identifying how their thoughts and feelings are related to each other.
3. Identifying body cues and how they relate to feelings.
4. Labeling their own strengths and weaknesses.
5. Participating in activities to increase self-confidence.

Activities students can do at home to promote GRATITUDE:

Incorporate Gratitude Into Your Decor

- Incorporating a theme of gratitude into your decor can be a great way to keep thankfulness in the front of both your and your students' minds.
- A Thankfulness Jar
 - Keep a mason jar or another type of container in your office with colored post- it notes or small pieces of paper next to it. Write down things that you are thankful for, put them in the jar, and invite students to do the same. After the jar is full, you can even take the papers out and staple them together to form a little book to keep on display in your office!
- For each thing you complain about, share 3 things you are thankful for
- Find a gratitude app to use, such as Presently: A Gratitude Journal or 365 Gratitude
- Make a habit out of telling friends and family that you are thankful for them, and why

Do a quick feelings check in, such as:

“What made you feel proud today? Or “What made you feel excited today?”.

How Gratitude Feels

Today, we are going to notice the feeling of gratitude. To begin, take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. You can close your eyes if you want to. Now, I want you to think of something you are thankful for. It can be a person, place, object, or something else. Try to picture as much as you can about what you chose. Then, try to stay focused on what you are thankful for and notice the thoughts you have about it. Pay attention to your thoughts as you focus on what you chose. If you start to get distracted, that's okay, just bring your attention back to what you are thankful for. Now, take some time to notice how your body feels when you think about what you're thankful for. Does it feel light? Calm? Warm? Tense? Try to notice as much as you can about how thankfulness feels in your body. When you are finished take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. If your eyes are closed, slowly open them.

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More information about suicide from the National Association of School Psychologists can be found at the National Association for School Psychologist website (NASP.org)

**If you or someone you know is suicidal, get help immediately via 911,
Or reach out to the National Suicide Crisis Lifeline at 988**