

THE SPARKLE EFFECT

VARSIITY // BRANDS
BELIEVE IN
YOU

EPISODE THREE / SEASON THREE

SARAH CRONK

WWW.GENERATIONSPIRIT.ORG

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

CREATED IN COLLABORATION WITH



— AND —

OPENPhysEd.org

EPISODE THREE **SEASON 3** // **TEACHER NOTES** *Inside the Resources*

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCY OUTCOMES

➤ **Relationship Skills (Healing)**

- Students will establish trusting relationships with adults and peers of diverse backgrounds and abilities. They will seek and offer help within an established social network that includes diverse individuals.

➤ **Responsible Decision-Making (Healing)**

- Students will make decisions in an effort to establish and maintain the trust of others.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- **Episode Video:** Join Kevin as he works with inspirational leaders from around the United States. This guide focuses on Season 3: Episode 3 (Sarah Cronk).
- **Community Circle Building Guide:** Community circles are proactive environments that help students build community, relationships, and communication skills for supporting, encouraging, and cooperating with their classmates, teachers, and adult mentors.
- **Letter Writing Guide:** For thousands of years, letter writing has been an important way to build and maintain relationships between people. We can use letter writing exercises in social and emotional learning to practice relationship skills, communication skills, and empathy.
- **Peer Interview Guide:** The process of conducting and then writing about an interview can be an effective way to teach students important communication skills — specifically listening skills. The best interviews are guided by active listening because it can lead to meaningful but previously unscripted follow-up questions. An interview can also build social awareness because it provides the person being interviewed with a platform to express their experiences and points of view.
- **Academic Language Cards:** Critical vocabulary from this Believe In You episode.

COMMUNITY CIRCLES



Implementation Tips

GUIDELINES FOR CIRCLE LEADERS

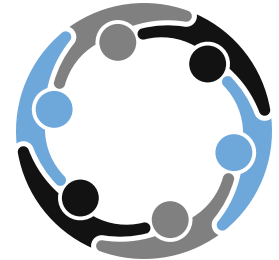
- **Sit in a circle.** This may seem obvious, but it's an important part of the process. If you're facilitating the discussion online via video call, there's little you can do to form an actual circle. Instead, have all students turn their cameras on so that everyone's nonverbal communication can be a part of the overall conversation.
- **Set norms or agreements** regarding how the group will communicate (listening and speaking). If possible, create and display visual reminders. Norms and agreements should be focused on respect for self and others, trust, and inclusion.
- **Use a talking piece.** This is an object that students will hold when it's their time to talk. This object can also be placed on the floor near the speaker's feet if there are concerns about sharing an object through touch.
- **Choose a formal leader.** This can be an adult or student. It's often effective to start with an adult facilitator and then progress to student leaders.
- **Use prepared discussion questions.** The first question should set the tone with a specific topic, and then a follow-up question should provide a reflection or connection to another important concept.
- **Close the discussion with everyone sharing.** A great way to do this is with everyone sharing "their weather." Students feeling happy and enthusiastic may say, "My weather is clear and sunny." Students feeling uncertain may say, "My weather is cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms." This provides students an opportunity to express their feelings without exposing personal details that they're not ready to share. Although this may be somewhat awkward when first implemented, it gets easier and provides a window into student emotions so that others can rally to help.



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COMMUNITY
Circle Building Guide

BUILDING INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS



Community circles are social environments that work to empower those who join the circle to support one another through active listening and courageous dialogue. Seek and provide support within this community of peers and mentors.

Watch Season 3: Episode 3 (Sarah Cronk) and then use the questions below to help facilitate purposeful discussion in your community circle.

Community Circle Discussion Questions

• **Focus Question 1a:** At the start of this episode, Kevin talks about how effective schools promote the education of all students equally. In what ways does your school promote the education of all students?

- **Follow-Up Question 1b:** In what ways could inclusivity be improved?

• **Focus Question 2a:** Social inclusivity was a challenge for Sarah's brother because he was on the autism spectrum. Being a part of his school's swim team made a very positive impact on his high school experience. Sarah saw this and made a personal decision to build trusting and inclusive relationships with students in her school who historically had not been included on the cheer team.

Have you ever made a decision to build a trusting relationship with a new friend, teammate, or classmate? Describe how that happened. If you haven't, could you make that decision today?

- **Follow-Up Question 2b:** How did the decision you described above improve your school community, team, or family circle?

• **Focus Question 3a:** Have you ever changed your opinion of someone who was different from you after spending more time building a relationship with that person? Why did your opinion change?

- **Follow-Up Question 3b:** Have you ever wanted to spend more time with another person in order to build a relationship that could change their opinion of you?

LETTER WRITING



Implementation Tips

GUIDELINES FOR LETTER WRITING EXERCISES

- **Empathize with the reader.** Before students begin writing, instruct them to visualize and imagine the intended reader. Who are they? How are they feeling? What is the best way to communicate with that person?
- **Define the purpose of the letter.** Is this a letter of encouragement? Is the writer trying to persuade the reader in some way? Instruct students to define and formally write the purpose of the letter in 1 or 2 sentences before beginning to draft the letter itself.
- **Consider the reader's reaction to the letter.** Instruct students to consider the various ways that a reader might react to the letter.
 - First, what if they react positively to the purpose of the letter? What is it that the writer is asking them to do in response? Write to create a desired action, even if it is a simple one. For example, a thank-you note is a letter meant to create a feeling of appreciation transferred from the writer to the reader. The desired action is simple but important — I'm grateful for you, please feel appreciated by me.
 - Next, consider the possibility that the reader does not react positively and has a response that doesn't match the purpose of the letter. What can the writer expect the reader to do in response, and how can the student learn from that response? For example, a letter written to a community leader asking for a policy change may not be enough to get the policy in question actually changed. The desired action in this instance could be an explanation of why the policy cannot be changed. Asking the reader to respond with specific reasons and facts may help the writer work to improve an argument or possibly reconsider and revise a viewpoint or approach to the issue.



**SARAH
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WRITING YOU
Letter Writing Guide
BEING AUDACIOUS AND OPTIMISTIC



Sarah made the audacious decision as a 15-year-old to write 101 letters asking people to help her reach her goal of a more inclusive world. Only 1 letter was answered, but that 1 letter changed everything for more than 15,000 students who now participate in Sparkle Effect programs through GenerationSpirit.org. Letter writing can be a powerful practice.

Watch Season 3: Episode 3 (Sarah Cronk) and then use the exercises below to help draft a letter focused on building a more optimistic world.

Letter Writing Guide

- **The reader.** Choose a cause that you believe in. Now, create a goal based on that cause. Sarah's cause was social inclusion for students with disabilities. Her goal was to start 100 inclusive cheer teams around the United States. Next, choose 1 company or organization that you believe can help you reach your goal. That company is your reader.
- **The purpose.** This is a letter of audacious optimism. You have a big goal and you're asking for the support you need to make that goal a reality. Before you begin your letter, write 1 or 2 sentences describing the type of support you're looking for.
- **The desired action.** If your reader agrees to give you support, what exactly will that look like? Be clear in your ask so that the reader knows how to respond.
- **Now, write the letter.** Type your letter and then ask a friend or family member to read it. Ask them to tell you if your purpose and your request are clearly stated. If not, go back and revise the letter so it is more clear for the reader.
- **Use this letter.** Now it's time to be truly audacious. Find an address for the reader, seal the letter in a stamped envelope, and send the letter. If you get a reply — GREAT! If not, then be like Sarah and stay optimistic. Send more letters (maybe even 100!) and see what happens next.

PEER INTERVIEWS



Implementation Tips

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- **Define the purpose of the interview.** Is this an open-ended interview meant to learn more about a person? Or is it a focused interview meant to gather a unique perspective on a specific subject or event? Write the purpose of the interview in 1 or 2 sentences before you begin drafting the interview questions.
- **Prepare targeted leading questions** with a follow-up question for each one. All questions should be crafted to get at the purpose of the interview. It's important to remember that follow-up questions can and should change to bring out interesting and alternative perspectives that come naturally from the interview process. Avoid yes/no types of questions and be prepared to rephrase a question if needed.
- **Listen and document what you hear**, not what you want to hear. An interview is meant to gather a diverse set of experiences and perspectives. Allow the interviewee to express themselves without casting a filter on what's being shared.
- **Start questions with open-ended pronouns:** who, what, where, when, why, and how. These types of questions help you avoid yes/no questions.
- **Allow some awkward silence.** If asked the right questions, the interviewee will need time to think about a meaningful response. Allow time for thinking and don't rush the process.
- **Stay in the moment.** Listen as the interviewee responds to your questions, document what you hear, and then ask follow-up questions. The best follow-up questions are influenced by the stories that are being shared. Don't allow your mind to wander to the next question. Be in the moment and listen carefully to what's being said.



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LISTEN/LEARN

Peer Interview Guide

CULTIVATING INCLUSION



The process of conducting and writing about an interview can be an effective way to learn important communication skills — specifically listening skills. The best interviews are guided by the use of active listening because it can lead to meaningful but previously unscripted follow-up questions. An interview can build social awareness and diverse relationships because it provides the person being interviewed a platform to express experiences and points of view.

Watch Season 3: Episode 3 (Sarah Cronk) and then use the guide below to create and conduct an interview with a classmate or teacher. Take notes, then write a 1-page summary of your interview.

Interview Guide

- **The purpose of this interview:** How inclusive is your school? What does the interviewee think about social inclusion in your school? Does the interviewee have ideas for making the school more inclusive?
- Write 3 questions, each with 1 related follow-up question. Start your first question with why, your second question with when, and your third question with how.
- Use the following question as your final leading question: “*What is 1 thing that you can do to help me improve social inclusion in our school?*” Next, write 1 possible follow-up question.

AUDACIOUS

(adjective)

Demonstrating a willingness to take bold risks in pursuit of a goal.

As a 15-year-old, Sarah was *audacious* and optimistic as she wrote letter after letter in order to reach her goal.

INCLUSION

(noun)

A state of involvement,
empowerment, and
respect for all people.

Sarah actively works
for *inclusion* in all
school communities.

OPTIMISM

(noun)

A feeling of hopefulness
and confidence about
the future.

After 100 of Sarah's letters
were ignored, her *optimism*
helped her continue to work
toward her goal.