

EMPOWERMENT

VARSIITY // BRANDS

BELIEVE IN YOU

EPISODE SIX / SEASON THREE

GEENA THE LATINA

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

CREATED IN COLLABORATION WITH



— AND —

OPENPhysEd.org

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

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCY OUTCOMES

➤ **Social Awareness (Empowerment)**

- Students will be able to identify and utilize family, school, and community resources and supports in the pursuit of defined personal and collective community goals.

➤ **Social Awareness (Healing)**

- Students will be able to identify and utilize family, school, and community resources and supports to actively work toward personal and community healing.

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 6 (Geena the Latina).
- **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

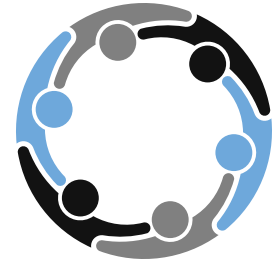
GUIDELINES FOR CIRCLE LEADERS

- **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.



GEENA THE LATINA

COMMUNITY Circle Building Guide EMPOWERMENT



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 6 (Geena the Latina) and then use the questions below to help facilitate purposeful discussion in your community circle.

Community Circle Discussion Questions

• **Focus Question 1a:** Geena experienced tragedy in her life when both of her brothers were murdered. She fell into depression but allowed positive people in her life to help her out of her negative emotions. What do you think Geena meant when she said that it's important to feel emotions, but not to live in those emotions?

- **Follow-Up Question 1b:** How can you help someone rise out of negative emotions?

• **Focus Question 2a:** In high school, Geena used softball as a positive way to stay focused and out of trouble. As an adult, she used her work in radio in this same way. What are some activities available in your community that can help you in this way?

- **Follow-Up Question 2b:** How might you encourage a friend or family member to focus on positive activities and goals?

• **Focus Question 3a:** Geena tells us that every voice is important and can be powerful and that it doesn't matter if you're speaking to 1 person or a million people. How can you use your voice to help others be positive?

- **Follow-Up Question 3b:** What can you do today to support and lift up a friend or family member?

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.



GEENA THE LATINA

WRITING YOU

Letter Writing Guide

EMPOWERMENT



For thousands of years, letter writing has been an important way to build and maintain relationships. We can use letter writing exercises to practice relationship building and communication skills.

Watch Season 3: Episode 6 (Geena the Latina) and then use the exercises below to help draft a letter focused on building a support network to help build healthy habits and making good wellness choices.

Letter Writing Guide

- **The reader.** Write this letter to a teacher or coach. Choose a teacher or coach who has helped you stay focused and positive.
- **The purpose.** This is a thank you letter. Tell the person you are writing to that you're grateful for the opportunities and guidance they've given you. Give 1 or 2 specific examples that show how their guidance has helped stay focused on your goals and dreams.
- **The desired action.** You want the reader to feel appreciated. At the same time, it's important for you to reflect on the people and activities that keep you focused and on a positive path.
- **Now, write the letter.** Type your letter and give it to your teacher or coach. Thank you letters are simple but important. Don't expect anything in return — just enjoy the positive energy.
- **Use this letter.** Allow the positivity of this letter to build your positive momentum. Stay focused on positive habits and keep making progress!

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.



GEENA THE LATINA

LISTEN/LEARN Peer Interview Guide

EMPOWERMENT



The process of conducting and writing about an interview can be an effective way to teach students 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 because it provides the person being interviewed with a platform to express their experiences and points of view.

Watch Season 3: Episode 6 (Geena the Latina) and then use the guide below to create and conduct an interview with an adult mentor who has overcome a personal challenge. Take notes, then write a 1-page summary of your interview.

Interview Guide

- **The purpose of this interview:** Discuss the process of healing with an adult mentor. What challenges has this person faced and how have they worked to overcome challenges and heal from negative emotions? Who helped this person heal and regain optimism? How have they used the lessons learned from these challenges to help them grow and find success?
- Write 3 questions, each with 1 related follow-up question. Start your first question with why, your second question with how, and your third question with when.
- Use the following question as your final leading question: “*What is one piece of advice that you’d give someone trying to heal from negative emotions?*” Next, write 1 possible follow-up question.

EMOTION

(noun)

A natural feeling
created by
circumstances, mood,
or relationships.

Geena encourages you to
accept and feel *emotions*
while staying focused on a
positive path forward.

HEAL

(verb)

To become
healthy again.

People can *heal* with the
help and support of others.

VOICE

(noun)

**An expression of your
personal values and
point of view.**

Geena has learned how to
use her voice to help others
who are experiencing tragedy
and challenges.