

Pieces of Mind

CURRICULUM GUIDE



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA



Pieces of Mind Curriculum Guide

Created by Orlando Family Stage in partnership with University of Central Florida through “Mind Matters,” a theatre-based mental health initiative for teens

For use with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology,
available through [YouthPLAYS](#)

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About this Curriculum

Pieces of Mind is an anthology of ten short plays about mental health for use in the classroom or onstage. *Pieces of Mind* plays and performance rights can be purchased on the YouthPLAYS website. This curriculum guide contains lesson plans to enhance the study of each play in the *Pieces of Mind* anthology. The curriculum focuses on a play’s dramatic circumstances and fictional characters, allowing students to explore mental health issues safely and productively. Each play is complemented by two fifty-minute lesson plans:

- **Session One** focuses on reading and discussing the play, and is similarly structured across the curriculum.
- **Session Two** uses a variety of drama-based techniques to explore the mental health themes within the play, including performance, playwriting, design, and directing.

The lesson plans also contain “Mindfulness Breaks” – a chance for students to pause and recenter through movement, breath, or meditation. You can find a collection of simple, repeatable exercises in our **Mindfulness Break Bank** for this purpose.

The curriculum meets the following [National Arts Standards](#) and [Common Core English Language Arts standards](#):

- TH:Cr1.1.HSI.c: Use script analysis to generate ideas about a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.
- TH:Cr2.HSII.b: Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.
- TH:Re7.1.HSI.a: Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.
- TH:Re9.1.HSI.c: Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1](#): Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1](#): Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

These lessons were developed by professional teaching artists, high school theatre educators, and university theatre faculty. As an oral tradition, theatre exercises are gathered and adapted from a variety of sources, at times leaving the original source unknown. Some exercises in this curriculum borrow inspiration from a wide variety of influential theatre practitioners, including: Megan Alritz and Lynn Hoare; Augusto Boal; Katie Dawson and Bridget Kiger Lee; Jonathan Neelands and Tony Goode; Michael Rohd; Viola Spolin, and others. With gratitude, we acknowledge their continued impact on theatre education and arts integration.

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

AP Despondency

BY EISLINN GRACEN



Session One

AP DESPONDENCY

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness, anxiety, testing anxiety, depression, perception versus reality
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils.
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *AP Despondency* by Eislinn Gracen.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

Let's move back into our seated position and take a moment to settle in for today's class. I'm going to invite you to relax. Find your tallest posture, rest your hands gently in your lap, and (if in chairs) uncross your legs and feel your feet's connection to the ground. If it feels comfortable to do so, you may close your eyes, or find a gentle soft focus. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. With your next breath, bring yourself more fully into the space (pause). With your next breath, take a moment to acknowledge any tensions or worries you are bringing to today's class (pause). With your next breath, think of one word that captures what you hope to contribute to today's class. For example, it might be "focus," "passion," or "creativity" (pause). Focus on that word as you continue to breathe (pause). When you're ready, please open your eyes and bring your attention back to me.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from Pieces of Mind, a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *AP Despondency* by Eislinn Gracen.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned.
Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. What circumstances cause Maeve's anxiety to heighten? How does her anxiety impact the way she views herself? The world around her?
4. What moments from this play would you be the most interested to see in performance? What clues has the playwright provided about theatrical choices to indicate Maeve's perception of her circumstances, versus reality?
5. What helps Maeve to challenge the notion of being a "failure," and to begin seeing herself as a "fighter?"

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take a short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

AP DESPONDENCY

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To examine why the playwright uses cultural references to express Maeve's anxiety in <i>AP Despondency</i>. To collaborate on using theatrical tools to activate a moment of dramatic text. To explore how Maeve challenges her negative thoughts.
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theatrical tools: physicality, vocalization, staging, lighting, sound, etc. Cultural references
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social anxiety Testing anxiety Self-perception Negative self-talk
Materials:	"Cultural References Slides" (see end of lesson plan); computer, projector, and speakers; student copies of script; whiteboard or chart paper and markers; optional: assorted found objects for devising (i.e. scarves, paper, musical instruments, flashlights, etc.)
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will work collectively to theatricalize the cultural references within the play *AP Despondency* by Eislinn Gracen.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Theatrical Tools/Conventions
- Collaboration
- Devised Theatre

Mental Health Connections:

- Anxiety/Test Anxiety
- Self-Perception versus Reality
- Negative or Positive Self-Talk

NOTE: This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Prepare an open playing space, large enough for a seated circle.
- Prepare computer, speaker, and projector for the “Cultural References Slides” (see end of lesson plan). Alternatively, you may print still images of the slides.
- Optional: Gather assorted materials for devising (such as scarves, paper, musical instruments, and flashlights) and place them in the front of the room for student access.

0:00 Check In:

Begin with students seated in a circle with their scripts.

Let’s take some time to refresh our memory about the play we read last session, AP Despondency by Eislinn Gracen. Who can share a brief summary of the play? (Gather one or two responses.)

Ask students the following check in prompt:

Today we’re going to be looking at cultural references in the play. To get us thinking about this idea, I’d like you to consider: if you were to express your day so far in an emoji, gif, or meme, which one would you use, and why? (example: the “Michael Jackson popcorn gif” because my day has been full of drama!)

Students can answer by going around the circle or popcorn style.

0:05 Cultural References Discussion:

Thank you for sharing! Let’s build on this idea of cultural references as we further explore this play.

Discuss:

1. How can cultural references—like the emojis, gifs, and memes we shared during our check in—provide us with a “shorthand” for communicating ideas, thoughts, or feelings?
2. We’ll be looking at cultural references in *AP Despondency*. As theatre artists, what tools do we have available to help us evoke a cultural reference on stage? (*possible responses: physicality, vocalization, staging, lighting, sound, etc.*) **Note:** Write these responses on the whiteboard or chart paper.

At the time of publication, the playwright of AP Despondency was a college student—the youngest playwright in the Pieces of Mind anthology. In “The Author Speaks,” Eislinn Gracen says she wanted to, “infuse this show with the same campy fun that we [young people of her generation] watch on the Disney Channel.” What moments in the script can you identify that align with this vision? (Gather responses.)

Let’s look at a few more cultural references the playwright provides.

Play the clips on the “Cultural References” slides (see end of lesson plan). After each clip, ask:

1. Can you recall a moment in the script that feels like this reference?
2. Why do you think the playwright provides this cultural reference? How might this reference serve as “shorthand” for how Maeve’s anxiety impacts her perception of her circumstances?

Slide 1 depicts an evil snake, using Jafar as a snake at the end of Disney’s 1992 film *Aladdin*. This reference relates to the following moment in the script:

DR. GLEASON: *(Hissing or growling:)* C'mon Miss Maeve...everybody loves a good show and tell...especially teenagerssss and underpaid teacherssss.

From *AP Despondency* by Eislinn Gracen

Slide 1 depicts a witch, using the Wicked Witch and Flying Monkeys from 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, found in this moment of the script:

(As if they were the witch's flying monkeys, Matthew, Clementine and Taylor obediently and forcefully grab Maeve and drag her to the front of class, perhaps by lassoing her with some kind of laboratory/school equipment. Maeve is trapped.)

DR. GLEASON: I will ask you one. more. time. *(Beat.)* What did you do lasst weekend?

From *AP Despondency* by Eislinn Gracen

Slide 3 depicts a show choir using the Voices of Hope Children’s Choir performing on “America’s Got Talent,” related to this moment:

CLASS: WROOOONG!

(The class retrieves angelic choir robes from under their desks/in their backpacks and begins to torment Maeve with a show choir-ish song where all of the lyrics are "Wrong." Dr. Gleason conducts and perhaps even has a solo/riff of her own. This should be fun to watch as well as upsetting to Maeve. Just as the choir is about to hit their climactic note, there is a snap transition to real life. No robes, no song, no trace of a musical number. Everything seems normal.)

From *AP Despondency* by Eislinn Gracen

0:15 Theatricalization

Let's explore how the theatrical tools we brainstormed might help us depict these moments inside Maeve's mind on stage. Please select which of these references you're most interested in staging: snake, witch, or show choir. I'll give you a moment to decide and to make your way to your group.

Indicate three areas in the playing space, one for each group. Provide students with a 10-count to select and transition to their groups with their scripts.

Your goal is to theatricalize the cultural reference your group is exploring. Let's revisit the list of theatrical tools we brainstormed (on the whiteboard or chart paper). Within your group, discuss: which theatrical tools might best help evoke this reference on stage? (Give groups three minutes to discuss.)

As a group, your goal is to stage this cultural reference within the play, using what you have available in this space. This is not about fully staging a scene—what you share should be no more than 20 seconds, and you may only use up to one line from the play. Rather than focusing on the text of the play, your goal is to explore how you can evoke the cultural references within the text. Consider how theatricalizing that reference can help the audience to experience Maeve's emotional state.

Set guidelines for if students may use personal devices or belongings, as well as if they may use other items in the classroom or theatre space (including any scarves, flashlights, or other found items you may have pulled).

Even though we're working with simple materials (i.e. flashlights instead of stage lights), by thinking creatively and working together, there are many ways you can theatricalize this moment.

Provide groups with 10 minutes to work. As you circulate from group to group, possible side-coaching questions might include:

- *Which theatrical tools are most essential in evoking this moment? Remember, you don't need to use them all!*
- *How can you incorporate everyone in your group, even if they're not performing?*
- *Can you intensify this moment to help the audience experience it from Maeve's perspective?*
- *How can you use the resources that are available to you to give us a sense of this moment? (i.e. adjusting classroom lighting; creating acoustic sound effects)*

Before sharing, provide groups the opportunity to practice one more time (simultaneously) and to briefly discuss any final details.

0:35 Sharing

Allow each group to share their scenes. After each group shares, discuss:

- *What theatrical choices did this group make? What stood out to you?*
- *Did watching this help you experience the story from Maeve's perspective? If so, how?*

0:42 Final Reflection

Today we used the multiple tools available to us as theatre artists to explore cultural references in AP Despondency. These moments inside Maeve’s imagination illustrate her self-perception caused by her anxiety. What are some of the negative thoughts she expresses?

Write student responses on the whiteboard or chart paper.

Let’s take a moment to revisit the moment at the end of the play, when Maeve transforms the image of “anatomy of a failure” into “anatomy of a fighter.” “Fighter” seems like an important word choice. Why do you think the playwright chose the word “fighter” instead of “winner”? (Gather one or two responses.)

Let’s collectively embody the moment when Maeve challenges her own thinking, and considers a different perspective. Take a look at the words on the board. I’d like to challenge each of you to contribute to helping Maeve challenge her thinking—by crossing out a negative thought, changing a negative thought to a positive one, or simply adding a more positive message. Consider Maeve’s growth throughout the play. Consider positive things she may not yet know about herself, but needs to hear. Let’s take a silent moment to transform what we see on this board, just like Maeve does in the script.

Depending on the dynamics of your class, allow students to come up organically, to take turns, or to dictate suggestions to you to change/add thoughts to the whiteboard or chart paper.

Let’s take in what we see on the board (Pause.). As you read these more positive messages, see if you can focus on one positive word or phrase you want to carry with you for the remainder of the day. Perhaps it’s something you want to remind yourself of, or a positive energy you want to share with others. Take a moment and hold this word or phrase in your mind (Pause.). If you’d like, you can say your word or phrase aloud.

Pause to allow space for students to popcorn responses. Guide students through a collective breath before dismissing.

Support Material: Cultural References Slides

[\(Link to Slides\)](#)



Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

El Perdido (The Lost One)

BY JOSÉ CASAS



Session One

EL PERDIDO (THE LOST ONE)

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness, anxiety and depression
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils; white board or chart paper; markers
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *El Perdido (The Lost One)* by José Casas.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns. Provide the following check in prompt:

Today we're going to be reading a short play. The protagonist of this play is a superhero. To start us off, let's go around the circle and share: if you could have a super power, what would it be, and why?

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *El Perdido (The Lost One)* by José Casas.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. What are some of the pressures El Perdido faces? In what ways does he feel like "The Lost One"? (NOTE: Write these responses on of these on the whiteboard or chart paper. They will be used in Session Two.)
4. How does El Perdido express his depression? How is this received by Agent 14, his family, and his peers? What do you think El Perdido needs to hear most?
5. At the end of the play, El Perdido turns off the light bulb one last time. What might this moment represent?
6. This play is in a short format, which means we may not feel a sense of resolution. What questions does this play leave you with? Where do you think the stories of these characters go from here?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take a short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or

theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

EL PERDIDO (THE LOST ONE)

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts. To explore through play, physicalization, and discussion, the given circumstances of the main character of <i>El Perdido (The Lost One)</i> by José Casas. To move an abstract discussion about themes and metaphor to concrete ideas about seeking resources and support. To express power through tableau.
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given Circumstances Tableau Ensemble
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety Depression
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils; whiteboard or chart paper and marker; index cards or similarly sized pieces of paper (one per student); bandana or blindfold (optional)
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will use a theatre game as a metaphor to explore the titular character in *El Perdido (The Lost One)* by José Casas. Students will explore the connection between physicality, thoughts, and emotions.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Ensemble Building
- Script Analysis
- Tableau and Gesture

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies they can use on a daily basis.
- Students will use a theatre game to reflect on strategies to support themselves and members of their community.
- Students will explore how physicalization can impact one's thoughts and emotions.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Ensure you have an open playing space large enough for students to create a circle.
- List the responses gathered from the play discussion in the previous session (about the pressures El Perdido faces) on the white board or chart paper.

0:00 Check In:

Begin with the students in a circle, standing as able.

Let's refresh our memory about the play El Perdido (The Lost One) by José Casas. Who can provide a short summary of the play to help us remember details about it? (Gather one or two responses).

In honor of a play exploring heroes, in one word, what do you imagine a superhero might do on a day off? (Gather responses).

Although this prompt is fun and maybe a bit silly, it's an interesting starting point for today's session. We are going to think of different ways to help El Perdido cope with the pressures he faces. We'll do this by playing a fairly popular theatre game called "Minefield," but with a twist.

0:05 Minefield

Pass index cards or papers around. Each student should have one. Invite students to ball up their index card and throw it into the middle of our circle, adjusting them to evenly cover the circle if necessary.

We're going to imagine this is a minefield. These papers are mines — things we don't want to step on. A volunteer will close their eyes (or wear a blindfold) and we will take turns verbally guiding the volunteer from one end of the circle to the other. The goal is to help the volunteer avoid stepping on any paper. Each person in the circle can only say one direction (i.e. the first person may say, "one step forward," and the next one in the circle might say "turn slightly to your right"). This is a game of focus and trust. We're not playing to win or lose. We're playing to explore the themes of the game. Our goal is to try our best to help our volunteer succeed. Let's play a practice round.

After a practice round, play one or two rounds, depending on your group's size.

0:10 Minefield: Sharing and Reflection

Discuss the game as a group.

- Describe: *What did we do in this game?*
- Analyze: *How did it challenge us?*
- Relate: *Let's shift our perspective on this game a little bit. Instead of a field with mines, let's imagine we are inside El Perdido's mind — his "Mindfield" if you will. In the play, we hear El Perdido share: "I save and save and save everyone, but who in this world is trying to save me!?" What are the obstacles or pressures El Perdido faces? What thoughts might be running through his mind?*

0:20 Minefield With a Twist

El Perdido faces several challenges. Let's brainstorm different ways to help him. Grab one of the pieces of paper from our minefield and a writing utensil. On that piece of paper, write one strategy or idea that might help El Perdido cope with the pressure he is facing. You might even pull inspiration from the self care activities our superheroes practiced on their days off.

Although El Perdido is not a real person, the struggles he faces are very much real. Please answer the prompt thoughtfully. What are services and/or organizations in our community that might support El Perdido? What are healthy coping mechanisms he could develop? How might he reframe a negative thought into something more positive? Try to be as specific as possible. Once you're done, crumple and toss it back into the circle.

Give students two minutes to complete.

Great! Now let's add in the twist to our game. We will take turns, one person at a time, to be the person that needs guidance. As a community, we will give one set of directions at time, just like we did before. This time, instead of avoiding the paper, we will guide our participant towards them. Rather than avoiding, we are guiding to the solution. Guide each participant to a solution that is close, using the path of least resistance. Once each participant reaches the solution, they will pick it up, and read it to everyone in the group. Keep them with you, because we will use them later. Ready? Go!

Depending on time, invite as many participants to move through this new version of the game as possible. Once time is up, invite the others who have not gone through the game to pick up the remaining papers.

0:35 Minefield With a Twist: Sharing and Reflection

Discuss as a group.

- Describe: *How did it feel to play this version of the game compared to the first?*
- Analyze: *How does this version of the game connect to mental health and wellness?*
- Relate: *What strategies do you think would be most helpful for El Perdido? Why?*

0:40 Closing Exercise: Power Poses and Affirmations

We discussed some heavy topics with this play. Let's take some time to care for ourselves and explore a way our bodies can influence our thoughts. Have any of you heard of "power poses"? (Allow for a couple of responses.) Power poses are ways to hold ourselves that are physically open, making ourselves bigger and bolder to embody power, strength, and confidence. There's research that suggests that if our bodies physically stand or pose in a powerful way, our mind can also feel stronger and more powerful. Let's take some time to come up with a power pose that makes you feel comfortable, powerful, and confident.

Give a couple of minutes. Guide the students into poses that are open and confident to the best of their abilities. Make observations, such as: "I see open arms" or "I see shoulders back."

Make a mental note of how you feel in your body right now. As we hold these poses, listen to these words from Agent 14 from the play.

*Read aloud the following quotes from *El Perdido (The Lost One)*:*

AGENT 14: The world is never as dark as you imagine it to be. You need to know that.

*From *El Perdido (The Lost One)* by José Casas*

AGENT 14: You have been that change...for so many. *(Beat; kindly:)* Whether you want to believe it or not.

*From *El Perdido (The Lost One)* by José Casas*

AGENT 14: Asking for help does, in fact, make you a superhero.

*From *El Perdido (The Lost One)* by José Casas*

0:45 Check Out

Now, as we wrap up this session, let's take a moment to stretch or shake out any tension we may be feeling in our body after this work. I'm going to invite you to come to actor neutral and close your eyes. Focus on your breathing. Notice how it feels to let your heart rate slow and your body relax.

At the top of class, I asked you to imagine what a superhero might do on their day off. We may not be a league of superheroes, but we can all feel overwhelmed by life's pressures at times. Taking the time to rest and seek joy is a form of self care. Consider how you are going to seek rest and joy today - it might be as simple as taking the time to stretch, going for a walk, getting to bed earlier, or taking five minutes to read for pleasure. Commit to taking time for yourself today.

Take one more deep breath and when you're ready to, open your eyes.

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

The Girl Who Talks to Spiders

BY RAMÓN ESQUIVEL



Session One

THE GIRL WHO TALKS TO SPIDERS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness, anxiety and depression
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils; white board or chart paper; markers
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *The Girl Who Talks To Spiders* by Ramón Esquivel.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Engage your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

Let's move back into our seated position and take a moment to settle in for today's class. I'm going to invite you to relax. Find your tallest posture, rest your hands gently in your lap, and (if in chairs) uncross your legs and feel your feet's connection to the ground. If it feels comfortable to do so, you may close your eyes, or find a gentle soft focus. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. With your next breath, bring yourself more fully into the space (pause). With your next breath, take a moment to acknowledge any tensions or worries you are bringing to today's class (pause). With your next breath, think of one word that captures what you hope to contribute to today's class. For example, it might be "focus," "passion," or "creativity" (pause). Focus on that word as you continue to breathe (pause). When you're ready, please open your eyes and bring your attention back to me.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to read a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights, developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll discuss content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *The Girl Who Talks To Spiders* by Ramón Esquivel.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. How does the descriptive language and dialogue in the play contribute to the visual atmosphere and imagery that the audience experiences?
4. What are some moments within the text that are influenced by sound? (**NOTE:** Record these responses as they will be used in Session Two.)
5. Why do you think the playwright chose spiders? What might they represent? How so?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take a short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has

today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

THE GIRL WHO TALKS TO SPIDERS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts To explore, through script analysis, elements of design, physicalization and discussion, the given circumstances of Ana To start to move an abstract discussion about themes and metaphor to concrete ideas about seeking resources and supports
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> given circumstances soundscape design tempo rhythm dynamics syncopation
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anxiety
Materials:	copies of script excerpt, writing utensils, or noisemaker per student (ex: instruments, water bottles, paper, pencils, binder clips, books, binders etc.), yarn, white board, dry erase marker
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students work in teams to create a soundscape inspired by the spider language in Ramón Esquivel's *The Girl Who Talks To Spiders*.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Sound Design
- Devised Theatre
- Script Analysis
- Given Circumstances

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will use the soundscape exercise to reflect on the character Ana's anxiety.
- Students will brainstorm a web of community support.

NOTE: This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Create an open playing space.
- Determine group sizes. This lesson plan is designed for groups of 4-6 students.
- Place noisemakers in an area easily accessible to students.

0:00 Check In:

Begin with the students in a circle, standing as able.

Let's use our check in time to refresh our memory about the play we read in our last class session, The Girl Who Talks To Spiders by Ramón Esquivel. Who can provide a short summary of the play to help us remember details about it? (gather one or two responses)

In our previous session, we discussed how the imagery and elements of sound enhance the ideas and themes in the story. Today, we'll further explore and activate those concepts.

I'm going to ask you to go into your personal items and find something that can be manipulated to make noise. (hold up a pencil) For example, this pencil I have – what are some ways in which I could manipulate it to make noise? (gather responses and manipulate pencil as students suggest).

Provide students with 30 seconds to select a noisemaker from the objects provided, or one from their personal belongings.

0:05 Soundscape: Introduction

We're going to work together today to build a soundscape for this script. A soundscape is a combination of sounds and music that create atmosphere, mood, and/or emotional landscape. As we build, I want us to think really intentionally about elements of rhythm, tempo, dynamics and syncopation. So, let's use our objects to explore what those are and how they impact the sounds we make.

Invite students to experiment with their object, creating different sounds by tapping, shaking, plucking, or rubbing them. Encourage them to think creatively and explore the full range of sounds each material can produce.

Introduce and define one term at a time: rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and syncopation. For each term, provide an example of how it can be demonstrated through sound using your pencil, and then invite students to explore the term using their own object.

- Rhythm: The pattern of beats or pulses in music or sound.
- Tempo: The speed or pace at which a piece of music or sound is performed.
- Dynamics: The variations in volume or intensity of sound.
- Syncopation: A rhythmic pattern that emphasizes off-beat or unexpected accents.

Now that we've reviewed these elements, let's put them into practice by building a soundscape.

0:12 Soundscape: Building A Soundscape

We're going to start as a whole group by looking at a specific stage direction within the script:

(Ana lets out sound: sharp, pinging, not human.)

From *The Girl Who Talks to Spiders* by Ramón Esquivel

To start, let's take a moment to recall: what happened before this moment? What happens after this moment? In knowing that, what do you imagine the playwright wants the audience to experience or feel when hearing the spider language? (Gather responses from students. Answers should be documented on a whiteboard for students to refer to throughout the building of their soundscape.)

Invite students to choose sounds that align with the desired atmosphere. They can use vocal and respiratory sounds in addition to the sounds produced by the objects they are using. Experiment with rhythm, tempo, dynamics and syncopation.

0:20 Soundscape: Small Group

Share that students are going to work with a section of the text in small groups. They will be tasked with building a soundscape reflective of the action in the story.

Divide students into groups of 4-5. Invite students to review the provided excerpt from the script (see additional materials) beginning with the line:

NIKKI: We thought you believed in us, Ana. But if you're gonna come in here and lie -

From *The Girl Who Talks to Spiders* by Ramón Esquivel

and ending with the stage direction:

(Spider language fades.)

From *The Girl Who Talks to Spiders* by Ramón Esquivel

Students should focus on language and sound. They will be sharing out with one another "podcast style," meaning they needn't worry about movement/choreography.

Remember a well-designed soundscape adds depth and impact. By carefully selecting, integrating, and balancing sounds, how are you enhancing the storytelling and engaging the audience's senses?

Provide students with working time in their small groups.

0:30 Soundscape: Sharing and Reflection

Invite groups to share their soundscapes with one another. After each group, discuss:

- *What stood out to you within this soundscape?*
- *How did this soundscape help you better understand Ana's given circumstances, or help you to see her story in a new way?*

0:40 Discussion & Closing Exercise: Threads of Wisdom

Ask students to make their way to a sitting circle.

The short format of this play leaves us without a resolution. The play ends with Ana and Arabella beginning a conversation about how to understand one another. What are some ways in which Ana might begin to understand Arabella? What are some questions that she could ask Arabella? Invite students to respond.

Now that we have this list, let's translate these ideas to real life. We are going to be as specific as possible.

Pull out the ball of yarn.

We're going to each share a connection that we have within our own campus or community who we would go to check in and have these conversations with should we be experiencing anything similar. You're going to share your connection (Students should not feel obligated to provide specific names; they can use more general terms like "sibling," "counselor," "coach," "teacher," "mentor", "family member" etc.) and pass the ball of yarn so that we are creating a web of connections.

Invite all students to share their connection until a web is made.

Let's give our web a lift. (Invite students to lift web off the ground.) This web represents the natural ups and downs of our connections. As we pull it in and let it out, we're really diving into the intricate map of relationships that bind us together. Take a quick scan around—see all those lines that tie us to people in various ways? They're like the invisible strings that keep us grounded. Think about the crew you've got: friends, family, mentors, folks who've got your back. Just like a web needs every thread to hold strong, we lean on these ties for strength and guidance in our journey.

0:47 Check Out

Move to a closing circle.

As we wrap up this session, let's take a moment to stretch or shake out any tension we may be feeling in our body after this work. I'm going to invite you to come to actor neutral and close your eyes. Focus on your breathing. Notice how it feels to let your heart rate slow and your body relax.

On your next breath, bring yourself out of our exploration of the play and into the present day and time. (Pause.)

On your next breath, think of one thing you can do today that will feel good in your body. This might be going for a walk, resting your eyes, eating a good meal, or asking for a hug from someone you love. (Pause.)

On your final breath, think of one person you want to send some love and support to – this can be anyone you know, including yourself. Think of how you can check in with that person today, and make a commitment to check in with them. (Pause.)

Take one more deep breath and when you're ready to, open your eyes.

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Go! Fight! Win!

BY LOJO SIMON



Session One

GO, FIGHT, WIN!

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *Go, Fight, Win!* by Lojo Simon.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves, share their pronouns, and respond to the prompt of the day.

Prompt for the day: If you were food, what type of food would you be today and why? This can be different from yesterday or any other day.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *Go, Fight, Win!* by Lojo Simon.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines "diversity" as "the condition of... being composed of differing elements." It defines "inclusion" as "the act of including...with the general population." How do you see examples of diversity versus inclusion present in this play? (Take note or jot down some of the responses here to reference in the second lesson plan.)
4. "Cancel Culture" is a phenomenon in which some people, businesses, or brands who have been deemed to act in an inappropriate way are boycotted or ostracized. How do you think this play relates to "cancel culture?"
5. In the end of the play, the students settle on the idea that listening is the first step to a solution. Can you identify the different ways students in the play listened to each other? If the characters listened to each other sooner, how would that have affected the climax and resolution of the play?
6. In general, one may say this is a play about identity -- group identity and individual identity. Recall our check in question for the day. Let's make an amendment to that question: if this group (us here in this room) were a meal, what meal would we be? Is it possible to include everyone, and their food identities, in that meal? What does it feel like to be included or not included in that meal?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take another short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

GO, FIGHT, WIN!

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts To analyze the script To identify a directorial concept
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tableau, Image, Director, Theme
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity, Inclusion
Materials:	Paper or white board to display Diversity Statements, colored markers, student laptops or devices, soothing music, copies of the play
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will create a directorial concept using the play *Go, Fight, Win!* by Lojo Simon.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Identify the theme of a play
- Use images to create a directorial concept
- Connect the concept back to the text

Mental Health Connections:

- Group Identity
- Understanding how our actions affect the world around us

NOTE: *This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Write on the board or post the following quotes around the room:
 - "Diversity doesn't look like anyone. It looks like everyone." — Karen Draper
 - "Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is making the mix work." — Andres Tapia
 - "Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization." — Mahatma Gandhi
 - "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences." — Audre Lorde
 - "Urging an organization to be inclusive is not an attack. It's progress." — DaShanne Stokes
 - "Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." — Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Supplies to have on hand: one marker, one laptop, and one copy of the play script per student.
- Have soothing music ready to play during thinking times.
- Make sure you have a large open space available in the room for circling up and/or presenting tableaux.

0.00 Check In:

Yesterday, we read the play "Go, Fight, Win!" by Lojo Simon and connected with the text as readers and as audience, discussing our reaction to the piece. Today, we are going to put on our artistic hats-- directors hats, to be specific. We'll first analyze the theme of this play, then shape a directorial concept around that theme, and finally, we'll connect that concept back to the text.

0.02 Activity: Diversity Statements

This play looks at how a diverse group of students navigates their identity as a group as they search for the new name of their school mascot. Yesterday, we discussed how this play made us think about the difference between diversity and inclusion.

Read some of the responses you collected from the students in Session One.

Part 1:

I have placed statements around the room about diversity and inclusion. I would like you to take a marker and walk around the room, considering these statements.

1. *Put a dot by a statement that you feel is non-negotiable.*
2. *Put a star by a statement that sparks your curiosity.*

After students are finished making their marks, direct them to gather, preferably seated in a circle, and discuss their initial reactions to these statements as a group. You may use such questions for discussion as:

- *Who can explain why you feel a statement is non-negotiable?*
- *Are you surprised by any markings you see from others?*
- *In what way do certain statements spark your curiosity?*
- *How do these statements remind you about how characters in our play feel about diversity and inclusion?*

Direct the students to break into groups of 3-5 students by aligning themselves with the quote they feel is most closely connected to the play. They will need digital devices for the next part of the activity.

Part 2: *Now that we have discussed our initial reactions, I want you each to conduct an internet search for an image that comes to mind based on your group's quote. The image may NOT include a human face or any words. Think outside the box! Consider colors, patterns and shapes. How can you visually represent your reaction to this statement? Everyone should find their own image – your group should have one image per student. (3 minutes maximum)*

Instruct students to set up their laptop with the image on full screen to create a gallery of images for each small group. Allow students a few minutes to circulate around the room and observe all the images before analyzing aloud as a group.

- Students may comment on the images using the sentence starters:
 - “I appreciate...”
 - “I wonder...”

0.20 Activity: Defining a Theme

Images are powerful ways to communicate a message in an artistic fashion. As a director, images like the ones you have selected can inspire the images that we create onstage and help focus our direction around a theme found in the play.

- Theme: an idea that is pervasive throughout a work of art or literature

In your groups, choose one image from those that you shared that you think best represents the message in the play. Discuss as a group- if you were to summarize this image in a theme, what would that be?

- Some examples of themes might be: “There is no such thing as a group identity” or “Inclusion means making room for everyone.”
- HINT: A strong theme will have a point of view.

Pass out copies of the play for students to reference.

Work as a group to find a quote or action from the play that supports the theme you have chosen.

0:25 Creating a Theatrical Representation of the Theme

Finally, it's time to create a moment of theatre to represent the theme and inspirations you have chosen as directors. Think about the quote or action you selected that supports your theme. You are going to create a frozen stage picture, also known as a tableau, to bring that moment to life in a theatrical way. Here are some things to consider:

- *What kind of shapes and angles can you apply from your inspiration image that help support the theme you have chosen? Is there inherent tension or harmony in the composition of the picture? Can you recreate this with objects or people?*
- *What colors from your image support your theme? Is there a particular emotion you want to elicit from the audience? Can you include this in your tableau?*

Allow each group 5 minutes to plan and practice their tableau. Once student groups are ready, have all the groups perform a practice run by freezing in their tableaux simultaneously.

Great work! I have one final instruction for you. Now that you have your tableau set, identify at least one person from the group to introduce your piece when you share with the class. Be sure to include the inspiration image that you selected, your theme, and the quote or action from the play that inspired your tableau.

Once student groups are ready, have each group share the final result. Be sure to acknowledge them with snaps or applause!

Optional Extension Activity:

Invite multiple groups to show their tableau at the same time allowing the rest of the students to identify how these images complement each other and/or complicate the story.

0:40 Reflection

Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion after the groups have shared:

- Describe: Who can remind us of the activities we did here today?
- Analyze: Why do you think, as directors, we tried to show our message in an image instead of in words?
- Relate: How did the images or tableaux today make you think about using art to discuss diversity and inclusion in our society?

0:45 Check Out

To close our exploration today, complete the phrase “_____ : It Made Me Think” with one word or phrase that sparked your curiosity today.

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Let Them Play

BY LINDZ AMER



Session One

LET THEM PLAY

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *Let Them Play* by Lindz Amer.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves, share their pronouns, and respond to the prompt of the day.

Prompt for the day: If you were food, what type of food would you be today and why? This can be different from yesterday or any other day.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *Let Them Play* by Lindz Amer.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, take note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. Do you think theatre is an effective medium to explore identity, politics, or representation? Why or why not?
4. Aside from identity, this play is about mental health. Who is the main subject with a mental health issue? How is their mental health affected by the events referenced in the play?
5. When is the turning point for Quinn's mental health in this play?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take another short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, “Words matter: It makes me think” or, “Power of community: It makes me think.”

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

LET THEM PLAY

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts. To analyze the way the character Quinn felt through image work. To identify productive ways to support a peer through active listening.
Theatre Vocabulary:	image, space, physicality
Mental Health Topic(s):	active listening, peer support, empathy
Materials:	prepared notecards for the Image Theatre activity (see Support Materials); use of a whiteboard or large paper and markers for brainstorming as a group
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will explore the play *Let Them Play* by Lindz Amer through image work.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Work collaboratively to create Image Theatre.
- Empathize with the character through the physicality of the actor.

Mental Health Connections:

- Identify productive ways to support a peer through active listening techniques

NOTE: *This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Make sure you have a large open space available in the room for movement.
- Print or write out the following notecards for the Image Theatre activity (see Support Materials).

“Before” Cards:

1. Quinn being told that they could not play in the next game.
2. Quinn getting aggressive messages online after the video came out.
3. Students in the hallway approaching Quinn after the video came out.

“After” Cards:

1. Quinn being listened to by friends.
2. The school board meeting to reinstate Quinn as player.
3. Quinn playing soccer once again.

0.00 Check In:

Yesterday we read and discussed “Let Them Play” by Lindz Amer. Today we are going to explore the play as actors. First, we’ll warm-up our bodies in the space. Then, we’ll create some Image Theatre to analyze the main character from the play. Finally, we’ll discuss how we can apply lessons from this play to support those around us in real life.

0.02 Warm-Up: Those Who Oppress Us, Those Who Protect Us

Let’s begin by warming up our bodies and exploring how we can use the performance space in this room today.

Direct the students to begin walking around the room by using the directions below:

Stand with your feet hip-width apart and lift your chest and head. Establish a soft-focus with your eyes and focus on a point in front of you across the room.

When I say “walk,” if 1 was as slow as you could walk without moving, and 10 was a full-out run, begin moving through the space at a speed of 5. “WALK.”

Allow students to walk around the room for a few moments, encouraging everyone to keep hands and feet to themselves and to keep their focus up.

After a few moments, call “FREEZE.”

Take a look around the room without moving your feet. Take a mental note of how well we did evenly covering all the open space in the room.

Allow students to WALK and FREEZE again to spread out more evenly if necessary.

Now, we are going to do what is called “Triangulating” with the other actors in the room. Triangulating is when you create a dynamic shape onstage by forming a triangle between 3 people. In order to do this, I want you to start by silently and secretly choosing one person in the room on whom you are going to focus. Do not let this person know that you are focused on

them. They will be known, for the purposes of this warm-up, as your OPPRESSOR. When we start moving again, you want to stay as far away from them as possible.

Invite the students to WALK and cover the entire space again. After a few moments, direct them to FREEZE.

Keeping who your person is secret, what happened to the shape in the room when you tried to avoid your oppressor?

It's time to silently and secretly add a second person to your focus. This person is going to be known as your PROTECTOR. You want to try to keep them between yourself and your oppressor at all times. Remember to keep your selected people as secret as possible.

Invite students to "WALK" and cover the entire space again with these new directives. Ideally, it will be challenging for the entire group to find stillness in which everyone is both far from their oppressor and holding their protector between themselves and the oppressor.

Point to your two people. Were you successful? How did the shape in the room change as we added the protector role? How did your breathing change throughout the exercise? Did you begin to associate any feelings with the movement? If so, what were they?

0.17 Activity: Image Theatre

Images and shapes in space are powerful ways to communicate a message. As actors, space is our canvas and our bodies are the artistic medium. Let's make some images with our bodies inspired by the play.

For this exercise, you are going to choose either the "before" or the "after" of the play.

Separate the students into two groups ("before" and "after") and put each group on one side of the space.

If you are in the "before" group, I want you to think about what Quinn was feeling before the start of this play. I am going to pass out cards with a description of a moment in time from before the start of the play. Your task is to create a frozen image with your bodies that tells the story of how Quinn was feeling at that moment in time. You can cast one person as Quinn or you can all be Quinn. How you depict the moment is up to you. Prepare to share it with the group.

Pass out the notecards for the "before" group in number order, assigning 2-3 students per card.

If you are in the "after" group, you are going to do the same thing, except your cards describe possible moments in time after the end of the play. You will have 5 minutes to work together to create your image!

Repeat with the "after" cards.

Allow the students 5 minutes to create a frozen image in their small groups.

At the end of the 5 minutes, instruct the “before” group to present their images, without speaking, in order of the numbered cards.

Then, instruct the “after” group to present their images, without speaking, in order of the numbered cards.

Reflection Discussion:

1. *As an audience, what overall feeling did we get from the “before” side of the room? The “after”?*
2. *How about as actors? How did it feel to embody images to represent these unspoken parts of the story?*
3. *How did you see Quinn’s story take shape in this exercise? Was this an effective way to experience the arc of the story?*
4. *How can you connect this exercise to our warm-up exercise today? Who are the oppressors? Who are the protectors?*
5. *Were there moments during that play when other characters acted as either oppressors or protectors? Make an argument for your case.*

0:37 Empathy Brainstorm

One of the ways that “protecting” happens in this play is simply by listening. Judy practices empathy by listening to Quinn, ensuring they understand how they feel, and asking what they want to do about the situation. What are some ways you can practice active listening like Judy in your life?

Engage students in a group brainstorming session. Write their ideas for active listening on the board on a large piece of paper as you discuss.

Great work! These are inspiring ways to have empathy and support a peer who is feeling oppressed like Quinn.

0:45 Reflection

Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion after the groups have shared:

Describe: Who can remind us of the activities we did here today?

Analyze: Why do you think creating images with the body can help tell a story like Quinn’s?

Relate: How did our conversation today make you think about using active listening in your own life?

0:48 Check Out

To close our exploration today, complete the phrase “_____”: It Made Me Think” with one word or phrase that sparked your curiosity today.

Support Material: “Let Them Play” Index Cards

<p>BEFORE:</p> <p>1. Quinn being told that they could not play in the next game.</p>	<p>AFTER:</p> <p>1. Quinn being listened to by friends.</p>
<p>BEFORE:</p> <p>2. Quinn getting aggressive messages online after the video came out.</p>	<p>AFTER:</p> <p>2. The school board meeting to reinstate Quinn as player.</p>
<p>BEFORE:</p> <p>3. Students in the hallway approaching Quinn after the video came out.</p>	<p>AFTER:</p> <p>3. Quinn playing soccer once again.</p>

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Like A Jet-Fueled Mariposa

BY MABELLE REYNOSO
& ALVARO SAAR RIOS



Session One

LIKE A JET-FUELED MARIPOSA*

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.• To brainstorm ways communities can collaborate in times of adversity or life-altering events
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *Like a Jet-Fueled Mariposa* by Mabelle Reynoso and Alvaro Saar Rios.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

*The script and rights to "[Like a Jet-Fueled Mariposa](#)" are available through The Alebrije Writers Collective.

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

Let's move back into our seated position and take a moment to settle in for today's class. I'm going to invite you to relax. Find your tallest posture, rest your hands gently in your lap, and (if in chairs) uncross your legs and feel your feet's connection to the ground. If it feels comfortable to do so, you may close your eyes, or find a gentle soft focus. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. With your next breath, bring yourself more fully into the space (pause). With your next breath, take a moment to acknowledge any tensions or worries you are bringing to today's class (pause). With your next breath, think of one word that captures what you hope to contribute to today's class. For example, it might be "focus," "passion," or "creativity" (pause). Focus on that word as you continue to breathe (pause). When you're ready, please open your eyes and bring your attention back to me.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind" a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *Like a Jet-Fueled Mariposa* by Mabelle Reynoso and Alvaro Saar Rios.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned.
Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. How does each character view the world around them?
4. In the play, Fely and Zu are experiencing the same events, but their reactions are different from each other. What can cause two people to look at the same event through different perspectives?
5. How is mental health represented in the play?
6. What do you think happens to the sisters after the end of the play?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take another short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

LIKE A JET-FUELED MARIPOSA

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To connect play content to real life mental health contexts• To explore, through devising and discussion, the given circumstances of the characters of <i>Like a Jet-Fueled Mariposa</i>• To discuss the concepts of safety and bravery as it relates to mental health and wellbeing.• To create poems that reflect the students' perspectives on the play's characters, objectives, and relationships.
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black out Poetry• Devising• Ensemble• Objective• Conflict• Relationship
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Bravery
Materials:	Poster boards or pieces of butcher paper (6 of either), writing utensils (one per student), Thick black markers (one per student), copies of individual pages of the play (one or two per student).
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will discuss the concepts of safe space and brave space using the play *Like a Jet-Fueled Mariposa* by Mabelle Reynoso and Alvaro Saar Rios.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Devising
- Poetry
- Ensemble Building
- Objective
- Relationship

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will discuss the concepts of safe and brave space.
- Students will create Black Out Poetry to reflect on the concepts of safe and brave space and to explore Fely and Zu's given circumstances.

NOTE: *This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.
- Prepare individual poster boards or pieces of butcher paper with the following prompts. There should be one poster board or one piece of butcher paper per prompt. Set them around the space, so that multiple people can work on one prompt without crowding.
 - Safe means...
 - Brave means...
 - Safe feels like...
 - Brave feels like...
 - Safe looks like...
 - Brave looks like...
- Ensure students have printed copies of the play available, and set out one black marker per student.

0.00 Check In:

Let's refresh our memory about the play, "Like a Jet-Fueled Mariposa" by Mabelle Reynoso and Alvaro Saar Rios. Who can provide a short summary of the play to help us remember details about it? (Gather one or two responses).

Since the play explores finding a new place to feel safe and comfortable, let's check in with that idea. If you could hop in a plane, boat, or rocket right now, where would you go to relax? (Gather responses)

Thank you! In the play, Zu wanted to leave her home to find a safe space, while Fely wanted to stay and make her home a better place. Their given circumstances are the same, but they have different objectives. We could go on and on about the complexity of their circumstances, but for now let's focus on the idea of safety and bravery.

0.05 Poster Dialogue - Safe versus Brave

Invite students to approach the white board or the poster board.

First, let's start with some initial responses and predictions. What do you think safe and brave mean? What do they look like to you? Feel free to answer the prompts to get you started or you can write a word, a phrase, a sentence or even doodle your perspective on its respective space. I encourage you to write something on each side. (Depending on your class, you can do this relay style with one to two students per prompt at a time or the whole class can move about and answer at the same time. Allow about 5 minutes for responses.)

Now, let's take some time to read what our classmates have written. Let's take two minutes to look through others' writings. Feel free to respond to one of them, or circle or otherwise highlight a response you resonate with. Are there any similarities between them?

Interesting observations. If Fely and Zu were to join us in this discussion. What would they say about safety and bravery? (Gather responses.)

Speaking of Fely and Zu, let's transition to an activity that will allow us to explore the words in the play to create our very own poetry about Zu and Fely.

0.25 Black Out Poetry:

Ask students to get their printed scripts and to return to a seated circle (or to find a comfortable seated area for creative writing).

Mabelle Reynoso and Alvaro Saar Rios collaborated to give us these words that make up the play. We are going to explore their words through Black Out Poetry. This is a poetry writing and devising technique in which a writer redacts or erases words from books, newspapers, or, in this case, scripts to create a poem. These types of poems don't need to rhyme and they are more about self-expression and working creatively with what you're given.

You may share a couple of images of examples provided at the end of the lesson plan or from online resources.

Pick a number between 1 and 14 (Pause). Go to that page in your script. This will be your starting off point for your Black Out Poem. Take a moment to reread your page. What words, phrases, or ideas do you see on this page related to the themes of "Safe" and "Brave"?

Now, here's the challenge: you are going to create a poem based on the themes of "Safe" and "Brave," but you can only use the words on your page. With the marker, strike through or cross out lines of dialogue leaving visible only the words, phrases, or sentences you want to be a part of your poem.

0:40 Sharing

Depending on time, invite students to share with a partner, or as a class.

Ask students to consider: *How are these poems different? How are they similar? What do these poems tell us about the characters and their relationship?*

0:45 Reflection: Constellations

Maybe you've heard about the social justice concept of Safe Space and Brave Space. These are used by scholars, psychologists, educators, and even theatre practitioners to foster healthy relationships, communities, and ensembles. Safe Space focuses on making sure everyone feels as safe, included, and welcomed as possible. Brave Space focuses on welcoming challenges, and difficult conversations so that we can grow and learn from each other. These concepts are ever-evolving. They may look different in a variety of spaces and they may vary from group to group and person to person. It's important to keep in mind that everyone deserves to feel safe. Historically marginalized groups have less access to safety. Lack of feeling safe can impact our mental health and generate feelings of anxiety and depression.

Fely and Zu are both brave and are both searching for safety. However, their spaces are different. One of them even goes to outer space in order to find a safe space.

Let's play a round of a game called Constellations for our reflection.

Define the parameters of the playing space.

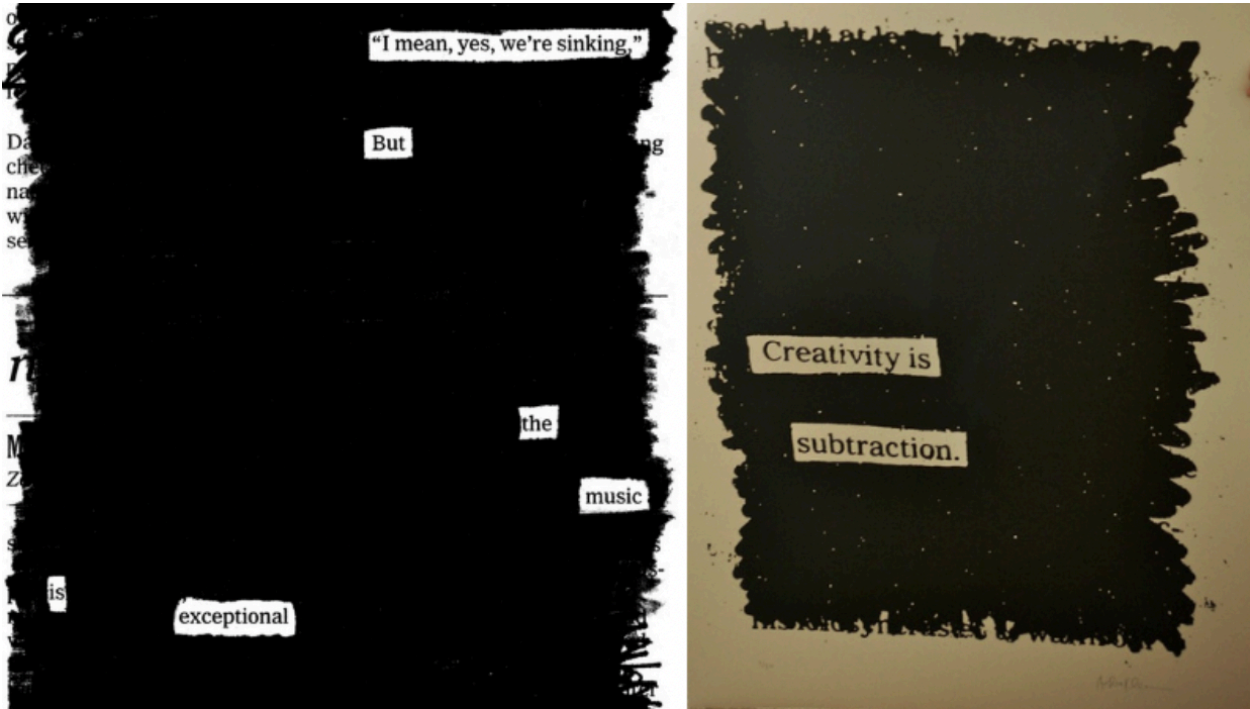
I will read a series of statements that will prompt you to approach someone in the classroom. You can either put your hand on the person's shoulder or approach and point at them, up to you and the person. The result will be a series of different constellations that will allow us to unpack these concepts. Ready?

Find a person that you've only known for a short amount of time. Turn to your constellation group and discuss. Can a space be both safe and brave? (Allow one minute or two of discussion.)

Find a person that you'd like to get to know better. Turn to your constellation group and discuss. Can a person be both safe and brave? (Allow one minute or two of discussion.)

Find a person that you'd like to go on a roadtrip with. Turn to your constellation group and discuss. How can safe and brave spaces help us be a better ensemble and collaborators? (Allow one minute or two of discussion.)

Support Material: Example Black Out Poems



Source: we-are-teachers.com

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Millions of Boxes

BY RALPH GREGORY KRUMINS



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA



Session One

MILLIONS OF BOXES

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.• To identify the ways that technology influences or impacts decision-making
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness, technology addiction
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *Millions of Boxes* by Ralph Gregory Krimins.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

Let's move back into our seated position and take a moment to settle in for today's class. I'm going to invite you to relax. Find your tallest posture, rest your hands gently in your lap, and (if in chairs) uncross your legs and feel your feet's connection to the ground. If it feels comfortable to do so, you may close your eyes, or find a gentle soft focus. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. With your next breath, bring yourself more fully into the space (pause). With your next breath, take a moment to acknowledge any tensions or worries you are bringing to today's class (pause). With your next breath, think of one word that captures what you hope to contribute to today's class. For example, it might be "focus," "passion," or "creativity" (pause). Focus on that word as you continue to breathe (pause). When you're ready, please open your eyes and bring your attention back to me.

When you're ready, please open your eyes and bring your attention back to me.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in

any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *Millions of Boxes* by Ralph Gregory Krimins.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. The "boxes" in the title of the play is a metaphor for the internet. Why might the playwright draw a connection between a box and the internet to illustrate their point?
4. Why might have Cam moved to the balcony? How can technology provide a valuable escape?
5. How did technology influence Cam? How does technology influence young people? What are the risks associated?
6. Allie works to support Cam to take a break from technology. Why would "taking a break" be a useful technique when overloaded with information or voices of others online?
7. The content commenters in the play (Likely Guy, Down Guy, Wolf Whistler, and Coyote Gal) represent the many individuals on the internet who influence or comment. How can peer or anonymous voices influence our sense of self? In contrast, what are some positive examples of how crowd-sourcing or virtual communities can be positive or productive?
8. What is our responsibility when using the internet to consider the perspectives of others? How can our technological interactions cause harm, or cause good?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take a short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

MILLIONS OF BOXES

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real-life mental health contexts To discuss central issues around technology and mental health To collaboratively devise a scene using the form and function of technology
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plot Theme Voice Over and Dialogue Levels and Space Tone and Volume Frozen Image/Tableau Devising Audience Aesthetic Form and Function
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology Addiction Escape vs Obsession
Materials:	index cards; writing utensils; whiteboard or chart paper and markers; "strongly agree" sign, "strongly disagree" sign; devising menu(s), either printed or projected
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will analyze technology use through a sociometric and embodied performance of Ralph Gregory Krumins's play *Millions of Boxes*.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Cohesion of Language
- Devising
- Image and Voice Work

Mental Health Connections:

- Escape vs Obsession
- Healthy vs Unhealthy
- Technology Addiction

NOTE: This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One so that students can remember key details about the play.

Session Plan:

Set-Up:

- Ensure there is an open playing space for movement and group work.
- Create “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” signs and post on opposite walls, with enough space for students to form a line in between.
- Print or project the “Devising Menu(s)” (see end of lesson plan). Keep this concealed until needed.

0:00 Check-In & Hashtag:

Begin with the students in a seated circle with a writing utensil.

Let’s begin with a thumbs check-in: thumbs all the way up (model) to all the way down (model), or anywhere in between, show how you are entering the space today. You will not need to justify your response. (Pause.) As we look around the circle, note where our class is as a group. Then, think individually about where your thumb is and how you might both bring yourself to the work and support others as well today as we work towards meeting our community agreements from the last session.

Let’s recall the play Millions of Boxes by Ralph Gregory Krumins, which we read in class last session. If you boil this play down to a hashtag, what might that be? For example, my hashtag for this play might be #balconywindowtotheworld. Your hashtag could be a series of words or a short phrase that identifies the plot or themes of the play (not yet how you feel about the play).

Pass out index cards. Give students one minute to draft their hashtags.

Let’s hear the hashtags that illustrate the plot or theme of the play in your own words. As you listen, think about the connections between the responses.

Select a volunteer and decide a direction to go around the circle. The facilitator should also share their hashtag when it's their turn.

0:08 Embodied Voting:

We are going to create a continuum on the floor. This side of the room will be “Strongly Disagree” (point to sign on wall), and this side of the room will be “Strongly Agree” (point to sign on the wall). In this strategy, we will vote using our bodies, where someone can stand next to a sign or anywhere in between. Where you place yourself shows us non-verbally whether you agree or disagree with a statement, allowing us to see shades of difference that we welcome as we dialogue. There is no right or wrong answer to this. There may be a range of responses and feelings, and all are correct.

Read a practice statement: “Pineapple belongs on pizza.” Allow students to practice moving along the Agree/Disagree continuum.

Let’s move on to some statements related to our play. With these statements, we’ll pause to discuss your choices. Remember, the purpose of these statements is for us to have dialogue!

Read statement #1: “Technology creates addiction.”

Select three people at different points of the continuum to explain why they voted the way they did. Remind students to listen respectfully and to honor the diverse perspectives in the group.

Read statement #2: “Technology provides space for productive energy.”

This time, we will create groups based on how you voted and where you are standing.

Create four groups based on where students are along the continuum (i.e. one group of “Strongly Agree,” one group of “Strongly Disagree” and two more neutral groups).

In your group, please discuss why you placed yourself on the line the way you did.

As students discuss, support them in unpacking key ideas about each word in the statement or combo of words, which students might interpret differently. This invites nuanced discourse into the room.

Thanks for those rich and robust conversations. Let’s consider: did technology provide a productive space for Cam? Was there a point in the play where this shifted? Let’s take these ideas into consideration as we explore what Cam was seeing as she looked into the “millions of boxes.”

0:20 Brainstorm Form and Function of Social Media Posts:

Invite students to find a comfortable area to sit within their groups.

Let’s list some apps Cam could use to look into other “boxes,” a metaphor for viewing other people’s worlds virtually.

Write down the apps students suggest (possible responses might be YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok—this list will vary depending on current technology). After students brainstorm, circle any social media platforms to focus on for the remainder of this discussion (Consider which apps would best lend themselves to performance, or what might be missing from the list.).

I want us to consider the artistic mediums used on these social media platforms. What artistic and creative tools do you use to create an Instagram post (photo, text, hashtags, etc.)? What about a TikTok post (video length, filters, songs or words, etc.)?

We know that social media platforms contain a range of content posted by diverse groups of individuals. Many people who view social media platforms get advice, information, and a window into the outside world through other people’s posts.

With this in mind, let’s imagine that Cam scrolls past a TikTok that might encourage her to be more intentional and mindful about her relationship with the “millions of boxes.” What might that content include?

Write student responses on the board. After each suggestion, ask “why” to encourage students to articulate their thinking. When the list is complete (5-10 responses), circle the three or four topics that you think have the most potential for drama work (as the facilitator, you have agency here; what on the board would be the best to embody?).

Thanks for this strong list. We will use this list in our creative exploration!

0:25 Devising:

Now you will work in your group to create a staged “TikTok reel” or an “Instagram post.”

Show one or both of the Devising Menus.

Your group will select one of the circled ideas on the board. You can also use your hashtags from the first activity. Your “social media post” should be about thirty seconds long, and should contain all of these elements.

Option One: Instagram Post

1. Photo: Some group members make a frozen image (tableau).
2. Caption: Other group members provide the text/description under the image (said out loud as the image is frozen).
3. Hashtags: Additional group members provide some hashtags for the post (said out loud after the text/description).

Option Two: TikTok Reel

1. Video: Some group members create a 15-second scene (spoken and/or movement).
2. Caption: Other group members provide the text/description under the video (said out loud after the 15-second video).
3. Hashtags: Additional group members provide some hashtags for the post (said out loud after the text/description).

Provide groups with eight minutes to work. As you circulate from group to group, possible side-coaching questions might include:

- *What messages is your social media post sending, intentionally or unintentionally?*
- *What are the artistic and creative tools used in the social media post, and how are you embodying them for us?*
- *How can your vocal energy grab your audience's attention through this short post?*
- *How can the composition of your frozen image grab your audience's attention?*
- *Try it out – you will be able to make changes as you rehearse.*
- *How might you “yes, and” ideas in order to collaborate more quickly?*
- *What is the director's point of view – is there a clear story? Will the audience be able to understand without further explanation?*

0:35 Sharing & Deconstruction

Ask for a first group to volunteer. Move clockwise from group to group.

To help us transition from group to group, I'll give a 3-2-1 countdown, and then we will all say "Swipe!" together. The effect here is that we are flooding Cam's newsfeed with positive messages to help her consider her relationship to technology and social media.

Give students a 3-2-1 countdown and practice saying "Swipe!" collectively to transition.

Begin with the first group, and move clockwise from group to group. In between groups, provide a 3-2-1 countdown for students to say "Swipe!" After all four groups have shared, repeat the 3-2-1 "Swipe!" transition to close out the sharing.

0:42 Reflection

After all groups have shared, discuss:

- What theatrical tools did groups use that paralleled the artistic tools used on social media platforms?
- What were the messages of the posts? What were the commonalities or differences across them?
- Why might these messages be important for Cam or other teens to hear? What would happen if you or Cam saw multiple of these posts back-to-back, how would this shift behaviors and actions?
- How could you use one of these (or more than one) ideas in your daily life? How would this shift your habits?

0:48 Check Out

Invite students into a standing circle.

Thanks so much for your work today. I'm going to ask you to close your eyes or look down. As we conclude this session, let's take a moment to take three deep breaths. Notice what this does to your body – does it relax you? Does it center you? Does it make you want to stretch?

Let's keep connecting with our breath for another minute. As we continue deep breaths, consider how deep breathing can help you to pause. Similar to when Cam gets overwhelmed in Millions of Boxes, you can always "step out of the box" and take a few deep breaths to bring yourself back to the present. Consider how the play set up the metaphor of a doorway between the internet and the real world, you can stand in that threshold and make a choice to go inside or remain outside.

Guide students through three more collective breaths.

Instagram Post

Work within your group to create a 30-second “Instagram post” that contains the following:

1. **Photo:** Some group members make a frozen image (tableau).
2. **Caption:** Other group members provide the text/description under the image (said out loud as the image is frozen).
3. **Hashtags:** Additional group members provide some hashtags for the post (said out loud after the text/description).

TikTok Reel

Work within your group to create a 30-second “TikTok reel” that contains the following:

1. **Video:** Some group members create a 15-second scene (spoken and/or movement).
2. **Caption:** Other group members provide the text/description under the video (said out loud after the 15-second video).
3. **Hashtags:** Additional group members provide some hashtags for the post (said out loud after the text/description).

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

The Naming of Things

BY ERIC COBLE



Session One

THE NAMING OF THINGS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness, anxiety and depression
Materials:	Copies of play; Writing utensils
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *The Naming of Things* by Eric Coble.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Engage your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

“Let’s move back into our seated position and take a moment to settle in for today’s class. I’m going to invite you to relax. Find your tallest posture, rest your hands gently in your lap, and (if in chairs) uncross your legs and feel your feet’s connection to the ground. If it feels comfortable to do so, you may close your eyes, or find a gentle soft focus. Breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. With your next breath, bring yourself more fully into the space (pause). With your next breath, take a moment to acknowledge any tensions or worries you are bringing to today’s class (pause). With your next breath, think of one word that captures what you hope to contribute to today’s class. For example, it might be “focus,” “passion,” or “creativity” (pause). Focus on that word as you continue to breathe (pause). When you’re ready, please open your eyes and bring your attention back to me.”

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we’re going to read a short play together from “Pieces of Mind,” a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today’s materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we’ll discuss content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let’s remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *The Naming of Things* by Eric Coble.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. What do you think the well and the birds represent? Why?
4. This play is in a short format, which means we may not feel a sense of resolution. What questions does this play leave you with? Where do you think the stories of these characters go from here?
5. What do you think the title of the play means? Why might it be important to name things or give things specific labels?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take another short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

THE NAMING OF THINGS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts. To explore, through script analysis, physicalization, and discussion, the given circumstances of Ethan and Laila in <i>The Naming of Things</i>. To start to move an abstract discussion about themes and metaphor to concrete ideas about seeking resources and supports
Today's Vocabulary:	Given circumstances, composition, tableau, soundscape, anxiety, depression, check-ins
Materials:	copies of play; The Naming of Things index cards (see Support Materials); pens or pencils; index cards; chart paper or white board; markers
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students work in teams, creating compositions to show key moments in the lives of the characters Ethan and Laila from Eric Coble's *The Naming of Things*.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Tableau
- Compositions
- Script Analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will reflect on how Ethan and Laila's given circumstances relate to mental health issues.
- Students will explore strategies for supporting Ethan and Laila, and will practice the support strategy of "checking in."

NOTE: *This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- *Arrange an open playing space.*
- *Print and cut out The Naming of Things index cards (see Support Materials).*
- *Determine group sizes. This lesson plan is designed for six groups of students.*

0:00 Check In:

Begin with the students in a circle, standing as able.

Let's use our check in time to refresh our memory about the play we read in our last class session, The Naming of Things by Eric Coble. Who can provide a short summary of the play to help us remember details about it? (gather one or two responses)

Today we'll be creating tableaux, or frozen images, in our exploration of this text. Before we jump into our session, let's use our bodies to practice this. Who can share with me a possible image that we might use? What is an image that has stayed with you since reading the play? (gather responses)

Now we have some possible images. I'm going to give you a slow ten-count to create a tableau based on one of these images from the play, or another image that stands out to you. Your tableau can be done individually, in a partner, or in a small group. Let's see if we can find these images and groups organically, without talking. Use the whole ten seconds to find your tableau.

Slowly count down from 10 to 1. Share observations about tableaux (for example, "I see eyes looking up. I see hands on heads. I see angles.").

0:05 Image Work: Ripple Effect

*Now that we've reminded ourselves about this play and started exploring it through tableaux, let's turn our attention back to the script and the characters and their **given circumstances**. I'm going to ask you to select which characters' given circumstances you wish to explore for the next exercise. Remember – this is not necessarily about which character you would want to perform, so you can pick either character.*

Divide students into two groups based on which character they want to explore - Ethan or Laila. Subdivide those two groups into three groups. Pass out one of the "Naming of Things index cards" to each of the groups.

Groups exploring Ethan's given circumstances:

1. Before Ethan was in the well
2. When Ethan falls into the well
3. When Ethan and Laila meet

Groups exploring Laila's given circumstances:

4. Before Laila was surrounded
5. When Laila becomes surrounded by birds
6. When Laila and Ethan meet

In your group, review the script and identify one line from the text - no more than one sentence - that best illustrates the moment listed on your card.

Provide time for students to reread script, identify lines, and write on cards. Each group should agree on one line to use.

With all of your group members, create a tableau that represents your line. At this point, we are not moving or making noise. We are making a frozen image. You have one minute to create this tableau. (Give one minute to work.)

Allow groups to build upon their tableaux with the following elements:

1. Movement into the tableau (i.e. fast or slow, direct, or curved, frantic, or calm). Give students one minute to work.
2. Non-verbal sounds to accompany the movement and image (i.e. made with body, such as stomping or clapping, or vocal or respiratory noises). Give students one minute to work.
3. Integrate the line from the text (may be spoken by one or more group members, echoed, etc.). Give students one minute to work.

Once all elements are created, allow groups time to practice their complete composition.

0:20 Sharing and Reflection

Invite groups to line up and share in order from 1-3, starting with each line followed by the sound/movement into the tableau.

After groups 1-3, invite observers to respond to the following:

- What stood out to you within this composition?
- How did this composition help you better understand Ethan's given circumstances, or help you to see his story in a new way?
- How did this composition relate to some of the mental health terms we discussed in our last session? What signs or symptoms were illustrated in the images?

After groups 4-6 perform, invite observers to respond to the above reflection questions for the character of Laila.

0:30 Discussion: The Well and the Birds

Ask students to sit where they are, and to adjust as needed so that they can see chart paper or white board.

As we discussed yesterday, the short format of this play leaves us without a resolution about Ethan and Laila's given circumstances. So, let's explore: Where do we go from here?

What are some things Ethan and Laila need to help them - either cope or overcome their current challenges? Let's stay within the world of the play for these ideas.

Write a list of supports for Ethan and Laila. Examples might include, “a ladder” or “headphones.” The important thing is to keep students within the world of the play at first.

Now that we have this list, let’s translate these ideas to real life. Be as specific as possible. For example, what might a real life ladder be for Ethan?

This discussion invites students to develop individual coping strategies for Laila and Ethan as well as community supports. Help them make connections to your own campus and community. If the students do not come up with the idea of checking in with Ethan or Laila, make sure to provide the idea yourself.

I’d love for us to zoom in now on the idea of a “check in.” Sometimes it can be hard to know how to check in with someone who you know is struggling, but it may be as simple as a text. Let’s see if we can get really specific. What might a check in look like? What might it sound like?

0:40 Closing Exercise: If This Hall Could Talk

Ask students to form two lines facing one another, standing as able.

It can feel tricky to check in with someone, but we’ve now brainstormed lots of ways that may look and sound. As we wrap up today, let’s imagine that we have formed a hallway of our school. I’m going to represent Ethan and Laila. As I pass you in the hallway, I’m going to ask you to practice a “check in” out loud. I won’t stop and engage with you, and your voice may end up overlapping with others. That’s okay – our goal right now is to simply try saying these check-ins so that we can feel more confident incorporating them in our daily lives.

Take a moment to look at the list of check-ins we brainstormed, or to think of your own. (Pause for thinking time.)

Slowly move down the “hallway,” allowing people to say their check-ins out loud.

If time allows and students show interest, the exercise can be repeated with volunteers going down the hallway.

0:47 Check Out

Move to a closing circle.

As we wrap up this session, let’s take a moment to stretch or shake out any tension we may be feeling in our body after this work. I’m going to invite you to come to actor neutral and close your eyes. Focus on your breathing. Notice how it feels to let your heart rate slow and your body relax.

On your next breath, bring yourself out of our exploration of the play and into the present day and time. (Pause.)

On your next breath, think of one thing you can do today that will feel good in your body. This might be going for a walk, resting your eyes, eating a good meal, or asking for a hug from someone you love. (Pause.)

On your final breath, think of one person you want to send some love and support to – this can be anyone you know, including yourself. Think of how you can check in with that person today, and make a commitment to check in with them. (Pause.)

Take one more deep breath and when you're ready to, open your eyes.

Support Material: “Naming of Things” Index Cards

<p>Group 1</p> <p>Instructions: Write one line of dialogue from the script that captures <i>before Ethan was in the well</i>:</p>	<p>Group 4</p> <p>Instructions: Write one line of dialogue from the script that captures <i>before Laila was surrounded by birds</i>:</p>
<p>Group 2</p> <p>Instructions: Write one line of dialogue from the script that captures <i>when Ethan falls into the well</i>:</p>	<p>Group 5</p> <p>Instructions: Write one line of dialogue from the script that captures <i>when Laila becomes surrounded by birds</i>:</p>
<p>Group 3</p> <p>Instructions: Write one line of dialogue from the script that captures <i>when Ethan and Laila meet</i>:</p>	<p>Group 6</p> <p>Instructions: Write one line of dialogue from the script that captures <i>when Laila and Ethan meet</i>:</p>

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Phone Less

BY JONATHAN DORF



Session One

PHONE LESS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness, habit, obsession
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils, slips of paper
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *Phone Less* by Jonathan Dorf.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In: Exploding Atom

Invite students to join you in a standing circle. If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

Share with students that you will be making a series of statements. Each statement will evoke a range of opinions.

Once a statement has been read, students should assess how much they agree with the statement made. If they fully agree with the statement, they should come as close to the center of the circle as possible. If they disagree with the statement they should move as far away from the center within a set boundary.

Remind students that there are no right or wrong responses and to remember to be respectful of others opinions.

Model an example, such as "I love pizza." After students position themselves according to their opinion, invite them to visually observe their positions.

Continue with the following statements, allowing students to adjust their position after each. As time allows, ask students to make observations such as, "What do you notice about the responses in the room?" or, "Who would like to elaborate on why they are standing where they are?"

- I received my own cell phone at an appropriate age.
- I consistently upgrade to a new phone as soon as they become available.
- I use a cell phone more out of necessity than for enjoyment.
- I set limits on how much I use a cell phone.
- My phone can overwhelm me.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *Phone Less* by Jonathan Dorf.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. Before I ask this next question, I want to make sure you have the definition of two words: *habit* and *obsession*:

- *Habits* are automatic, often unconscious behaviors acquired through repetition, and they can be either positive or negative. They form through reinforcement and can be hard to change. What are some examples of habits?
- *Obsessions* are intense, irrational preoccupations with specific thoughts, often leading to intrusive and distressing feelings. These may prompt compulsive behaviors aimed at reducing anxiety associated with the obsessions. What are some examples of obsessions?

What do you think sets apart a habit from an obsession, and can you find any aspects in the script that might connect to either of these ideas?

4. Do you think we as a society have an obsession with cell phones? Why or why not?
5. Do you think Sam will be able to uphold his agreement with the Apps? Why or why not? Would YOU be able to?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take a short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

PHONE LESS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts To explore play through given circumstance
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> newspaper theatre unison volume repetition pacing tonality actor tools (voice, body, imagination, concentration)
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> habit obsession
Materials:	computer and projector; copies of script excerpt and headlines (one per student, see end of lesson plan); "Devising Slides" (see end of lesson plan); chart paper; markers; paper; writing utensils
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students collaborate in teams to creatively integrate newspaper headlines into Jonathan Dorf's play *Phone Less*.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Newspaper Theatre
- Script Analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will employ newspaper theatre techniques to stimulate critical thinking and facilitate discussions among themselves about cell phone usage.
- Students will generate ideas for healthy habits related to how they use their cell phones.

NOTE: *This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Create an open playing space.
- Prepare projector and provided presentation slides (see support materials).
- Write the following prompts on individual pieces of chart paper for the “Poster Dialogue exercise.”
 - What is one word that describes your relationship with your phone?
 - Yes or No: Can we find a balance between the positive and negative aspects of cell phone use?
 - True or False: It’s important to think critically about your relationship with your phone
 - Name one positive aspect of your relationship with your cell phone.
 - Name one negative aspect of your relationship with your cell phone.
 - What is one healthy habit you have/could implement in relation to your cell phone usage?
- Place posters around the room, with several markers at each poster.
- Print copies of script excerpts and headlines for each student.
- Determine group sizes. This lesson plan is designed for groups of 4-6 students.

0.00 Poster Dialogue

As students enter the room, invite them to respond in writing to the questions and prompts on the posters around the room.

Once students have responded to all posters, invite them to join you in a circle, standing as able. Posters should remain up on the walls as they will be utilized at the end of the lesson.

Let’s use our check in time to refresh our memory about the play we read in our last class session, Phone Less by Jonathan Dorf. Who can provide a short summary of the play to help us remember details about it? (gather one or two responses)

0.05 Newspaper Theatre: Introduction

I had you start today’s session by answering some questions about not just your own cell phone use, but also how cell phone usage affects us as a society. To do so, we’re going to take inspiration from a form of theatre called “newspaper theatre.” Is anyone familiar with newspaper theatre? (invite student responses)

Newspaper theater is a creative method developed by Augusto Boal. It uses newspaper articles to create a performance. But it’s more than just acting – it’s a way to look critically at media bias and at important social issues.

Let’s look at this headline.

Project **Slide 1**, which states the following headline: “Teens aren’t addicted to their phones, but we like to think they are.”

This is a headline from News Scientist, a science magazine that covers all aspects of science and technology. This article was released November 29th, 2019.

I was curious. What if I utilized this headline and found a way to weave it into some of the text from the play Phone Less?

Project **Slide 2**. Invite students to read it in unison.

Ask: What changed? What does this piece say outside of the play? What statement does it make? Do you agree with that statement? Invite student responses.

We just read the text in unison. Let's try something else. This time let's alternate the way we deliver each line. Speak the first line at our regular volume, and then whisper the next.

Lead students through the exercise, ensuring they alternate between speaking and whispering.

What changed when we altered our delivery? Did the message or feeling of the piece shift? Invite student responses.

Great observations! By adding dynamics, like shifts in volume, we created new meanings and emphasized different aspects of the text than when we initially spoke it in unison. That's going to be important for you to remember as we move into creating!

0.15 Newspaper Theatre: Small Group Devising

Today you are going to utilize our script and newspaper headlines to respond to the question: Are teenagers obsessed with their cell phones?

Divide students into respective groups, designating specific areas of the classroom for them to work within.

Now, I'm going to pass out two pieces of paper. One has two excerpts from the script—the one we just used as an example, and an additional one. The other has ten different newspaper headlines related to teenagers and cell phones.

Your group is going to choose one of the excerpts and one of the headlines to bring together, similar to the way we did in our example. Your group's goal is to weave the two together, and to bring them to life through choral speak. We will then share our pieces with one another.

Now, before I open the floor for questions, I want to ensure we all have a clear understanding of the choral speak techniques we've discussed so far. Earlier in the lesson, we practiced speaking in unison, where all recited the poem together, merging our voices into one. We also experimented with dynamics by intentionally varying our volume as we spoke. Some other techniques you might consider:

- **Repetition**: Repeating a line can add significance. We did this with the line “teens aren't addicted to their phones” in our example.

- **Pacing:** *Changing the speed of our speech can be a powerful tool. Let's try saying "phone" three times - first very slowly to create suspense, then at a regular speed, and finally quickly for excitement.*
- **Tonality:** *We can also change our vocal quality to alter a line. Can you try saying "phone" with a breathy quality? How about nasally? Gravelly?*

These are just some examples of how you can explore vocal expression in choral speak.

Project **Slide 3**, which summarizes the instructions. Invite students to ask any clarifying questions. Give students the remaining time to work in their small groups.

0.30 Newspaper Theatre: Sharing & Reflection

Invite groups to share. Discuss:

- **Describe:** What stood out to you within this piece?
- **Analyze:** Do you think this piece would work within the current context of the script?
- **Relate:** How did this piece help you think about cell phone usage in a new way?

0:42 Check Out

Let's end today's class by revisiting our poster dialogue. I'm going to ask you to look around at what you and your peers wrote on each poster at the start of class. I want you to consider: Has your opinion shifted since the start of class? Is there anything you feel more strongly about than you did before? How has today's class helped you think about your own cell phone usage? As you look around on the posters, select one word, phrase, or idea you want to take with you after today's session, and mark it with a star.

As time allows, invite students to popcorn some of the responses/words they starred, or share with a peer.

Support Material: Script Excerpts

VARIOUS TEENS: I cried a little.
I cried a lot.
I'd keep reaching for my back pocket.
Hip for me.
I put some cardboard in a case just so I could feel the weight.
I should try that. I feel so off-balance. Still.
Sometimes I read magazines real fast to get that swiping feeling.
My mom got me a pager.
We got a landline.
Us too.
What's a landline?

From *Phone Less* by Jonathan Dorf

VARIOUS VOICES: (*Off:*) Quickly, everyone.
They know we're here.
Top off those charges.
Download the latest updates.
Set the countdown.
Optimize.
Don't let them surprise us. ...
PHONE: (*Off:*) Take only what you can carry.
VIRUS: (*Off:*) Disable tracking.
JUSTBREATHE: (*Off:*) Keep calm and carry on.
CARESHARE: (*Off:*) If you forget something, we'll share.
ACHIEVE: (*Off:*) Believe and we can achieve escape.
JUSTBREATHE: (*Off:*) Concentrate on your breath.
PHONE: (*Off:*) We move out in five.

From *Phone Less* by Jonathan Dorf

Support Material: Headlines

1. “Most U.S. teens who use cellphones do it to pass time, connect with others, learn new things.” ([Pew Research Center](#))
2. “New study links phone use and mental health issues in teen.” ([CBS News](#))
3. “Teens say social media is stressing them out...” ([NPR](#))
4. “Teen cell phone use at bedtime leads to insomnia, poor performance in school.” ([ABC News](#))
5. “Young people discuss how phones and social media create connection” ([CBS News](#))
6. “Teens say their experience on social media is better than you think. Here’s why.” ([CNN Health](#))
7. “Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?” ([The Atlantic](#))
8. “3 ways mobile phones can help teens explore their independence.” ([Mashable](#))
9. “Teachers say B.C. school teens showed improved grades and social skills after a ban on phones.” ([CBC](#))
10. “Most teens actually have healthy relationship with digital technology.” ([UW Study](#))

Support Material: Devising Slides

[\(link to slides\)](#)

Teens aren't addicted to their phones, but we like to think they are.

From *News Scientist*, November 29th, 2019

1

*I cried a little.
I cried a lot.
Teens aren't addicted to their phones*
I'd keep reaching for my back pocket.
Hip for me.
I put some cardboard in a case just so I could feel the
Weight.
Teens aren't addicted to their phones*
I should try that. I feel so off-balance. Still.
Sometimes I read magazines real fast to get that swiping
Teens aren't addicted to their phones*
Feeling.
My mom got me a pager.
We got a landline.
Us too.
What's a landline
Teens aren't addicted to their phones*
We just think they are**

From *Phone Less* by Jonathan Dorf
*From *News Scientist*, November 29th, 2019

2

1. As a group, discuss: Are teenagers obsessed with their cell phones?
2. Select a script excerpt and newspaper headline.
3. Integrate the chosen headline within the script excerpt.
4. Vocalize using choral speak techniques (unison, rhythmic patterns, pacing, synchronization).
5. Prepare to share.

3

- **Unison:** This involves all of us speaking together simultaneously. Using unison can emphasize specific words or lines, adding power and impact to those parts of the text.
- **Rhythmic Patterns:** By varying the rhythm of our speech, such as speaking faster or slower, we can significantly influence how the listener perceives the emotion or urgency conveyed by the text.
- **Pacing:** Changing the speed of our speech can be a powerful tool. Slowing down can create a sense of suspense or allow the audience time for reflection, while speaking faster can add excitement.
- **Synchronization:** This technique requires us to align our words/bodies precisely with others.

4

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Secrets

BY MELISSA LEILANI LARSON



Session One

SECRETS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness, identity
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils, whiteboard or Smartboard, timer, speaker and selected sounds
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *Secrets* by Melissa Leilani Larson.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

- As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.
- Prepare Smartboard or whiteboard with prepared questions

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

We're going to start today by focusing on your name. Think about your name and, and choose one of the following questions to respond to:

Share out the following questions with students via whiteboard/Smartboard:

1. Who gave you this name?
2. Why was it chosen for you?
3. Are there any associated memories or stories behind your name?
4. Do you like your name? Why or why not?
5. If you chose your own name, why did you select it?

Now, turn to the person next to you. You'll each have one minute to share the question you chose and your response. After one minute, I'll ask you to switch roles.

Set a two-minute timer. When one minute has passed, invite partners to switch roles.

Thank you for sharing! For now, let's transition to our next activity, but we'll circle back to this name exploration a bit later!

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore

mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.
2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *Secrets* by Melissa Leilani Larson.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned. Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. At the beginning of our session today, I prompted you to think about your own name. In this script, we learn that Lola's full name is Aurora, and Rory's full name is Aurora Dawn. How might these names symbolically connect to what we discover about Lola and Rory?
4. *Secrets* is the only play in the *Pieces of Mind* anthology that includes a senior citizen. What mental health challenges does Lola face? In what ways do we see the other characters support her?

5. In *Secrets*, we learn that Rory has previously disclosed to Lola that she identifies as “ace,” or asexual (someone who experiences little to no sexual attraction to anyone of any gender), and she later shares this information with Lillian. What makes Lola and Lillian people for whom Rory feels safe sharing this information?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We’ve had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let’s take another short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we’ll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let’s end with “It Makes Me Think” statements. In no more than three words, what has today’s play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or theatre. I’ll give you a moment to think, and then I’ll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase “It makes me think.” I’ll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, “Words matter: It makes me think” or, “Power of community: It makes me think.”

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

SECRETS

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts To identify examples of subtext to analyze the character of Rory from <i>Secrets</i>. To use script analysis and playwriting to imagine justified choices for a character's journey after a play.
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playwriting Subtext Monologue Character Arc Objective Silent partner
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity Disclosure Emotional Support
Materials:	copies of " <i>Secrets</i> Monologue Worksheet" (one per student, see end of lesson plan); writing utensils; copy of scripts; poster board or chart paper (enough for students to work in groups of 4-6); multiple blue and red markers (at least one of each per group); blue and red white board markers; timer
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will utilize collective script analysis and playwriting exercises to explore the arc of the character Rory in the play *Secrets* by Melissa Leilani Larson.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script Analysis
- Playwriting

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will reflect on Rory's decision to confide in trusted relationships.

NOTE: *This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Determine group sizes. This lesson plan is designed for groups of 4-6 students.
- Create one work station per group. At each station, place one piece of poster board or chart paper, and at least two different colored markers (the colors blue and red will be used through the remainder of the lesson plan). Each station should be easily accessible

by students and provide enough space for every student to be comfortably seated within reach of the paper.

0.00 Check In

Begin with students seated in groups of 4-6.

*Let's refresh our memory about the play we read in our last class session, *Secrets* by Melissa Leilani Larson. Who can provide a short summary of the play to help us remember details about it? (Gather one or two responses.)*

0:05 Subtext Mapping

*Let's take a look again at the play's title: *Secrets*. In our last session, we talked about how Rory feels safe sharing with Lola and Lillian that she identifies as "ace," or asexual (someone who experiences little to no sexual attraction to anyone of any gender). Looking back on the script, why do you think Rory chooses to share this aspect of herself within these relationships? (Gather one or two responses.)*

*The theme "secrets" makes me think about the theatre term **subtext** – what's beneath the spoken dialogue of a play. Let's look for examples of subtext in Rory's lines. To begin, we first need to identify lines where we believe Rory says something different than what she's really thinking. Let's start with an example.*

Write the following example, from the opening of the play, on the white board with a blue marker:

RORY: I just wanna—say hi, I guess.

From *Secrets* by Melissa Leilani Larson

Gather suggestions for the subtext of this line. Clarify that subtext is written from the perspective of the character. Possible responses for the above line might include, "I couldn't stay at school for another minute," or "I don't have anyone else I can trust." Write student responses on the white board with a red marker.

Now it's your turn. Within your groups, reread the script to identify moments where Rory says something differently than what she is thinking. Write the actual line—what she says—in blue. Then, discuss what she's actually thinking, or what she wants to say—her subtext—in red. Your group may have different opinions about what the subtext of a line might be, so feel free to write more than one possibility, like we did in our example. Your group can always revisit a line, and if your group comes to a consensus, you can circle the subtext is the strongest choice.

Set a five-minute timer for students to work together to identify lines of dialogue and brainstorm subtext. Following the five minutes, ask group members to discuss:

- What lines stand out to you on your group’s paper? What trends do you see?
- How did considering Rory’s subtext shape your understanding of her character? What do you notice about when Rory uses subtext, and why?
- Can you identify any lines where Rory speaks directly—lines that do not have subtext? What do you notice about these moments?

As time allows, invite groups to share their observations with the full class.

0.18 Playwriting: Creating Monologues

Subtext is a valuable tool playwrights use to create characters who feel realistic. After all, people do not always say exactly what they feel. As a class, we have now identified many moments where Rory does not voice her inner thoughts, as well as key moments where she does.

I’m going to invite you to now explore Rory’s story through the lens of a playwright. Secrets gives us a short glimpse into her life. Let’s consider: where might her story go from here?

Pass out “Secrets Monologue Worksheet” and writing utensils to each student. Depending on the needs of your space and group, invite students to return to their desks, or to find a comfortable writing position.

*I’d like you to imagine that you’re writing a sequel to this play. Imagine Rory and Lillian go to the dance together, as they’ve agreed upon. What might happen next? Based on this prompt “After the Dance,” you are going to draft a **monologue** (text spoken by one character) for Rory.*

Guide students through making choices for the monologue based on the worksheet, determining Rory’s **silent partner** (who she is speaking to), where they are, and what she wants (her **objective**).

I’m going to give you six minutes to draft a monologue. Remember, you’ll be writing from the perspective of Rory. As you write, I’ll give you some phrases to include – when you hear a phrase, start the next sentence your character says with that phrase. I’ll write the phrases on the board if you need help remembering them.

Your goal is to write for the full amount of time, even if it doesn’t feel perfect or make sense.

Set a six-minute timer. Say the first prompt out loud and write it on the board: “Sometimes, I wish I could ...”

At the two-minute mark, give students the second prompt: “What I really want is ...”

At the four-minute mark, give students the final prompt: “Can’t you see? ...”

After the timer ends, provide students with an additional three minutes to review and revise their monologue.

0:32 Sharing

Remember, we have only had a short amount of time to draft these monologues. The creative process can be messy, and you should feel proud that you were able to generate ideas in this short amount of time.

Invite students to share their monologues with partners or in small groups.

0:40 Reflection

As a full class, discuss:

- *How did the subtext mapping exercise inform your playwriting?*
- *Did you make any new discoveries about Rory through the writing process?*
- *Did hearing your peers' monologues offer any new perspective on Rory, or her relationships?*

0:47 Check Out: One-Word titles

In "Secrets," Rory confides in Lola and Lillian, which helps her accept herself and advocate for herself. Based on the monologue you drafted, if you were to give your sequel to "Secrets" a one-word title, what might that word be?

As time allows, invite every student to rapidly share their one-word title around the circle, and discuss.

Thank you for sharing. Today we've explored the impact of our characters' words—as well as what is left unsaid. You explored the power of your own words as a playwright.

Guide the students through a de-roling strategy as you model:

Now, let's take a moment to "de-role" from today's work. Picture a coat or another piece of clothing that Rory might wear. Pantomime taking off that coat, like an actor removing a costume. Now, pantomime putting on your favorite coat, sweatshirt, or sweater. Take a few deep breaths in and out, and shake it off.

Support Material: "Secrets" Monologue Worksheet

Prompt: After the Dance

1. Who is Rory's silent partner? (circle one)
 - a. Lola
 - b. Lillian
 - c. Rory's Mom
 - d. Wes
 - e. Other: _____

2. Where are they? _____

3. What does Rory want from her silent partner?

Draft your monologue below:

RORY:

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

The Strong Friend

BY IDRIS GOODWIN



Session One

STRONG FRIEND

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read and respond to a short play about mental health.• To discuss themes of mental health and wellness through theatre.
Today's Vocabulary:	mindfulness, mental health and wellness
Materials:	copies of play; writing utensils
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will read and respond to *Strong Friend* by Idris Goodwin.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Script reading
- Script analysis

Mental Health Connections:

- Students will practice mindfulness strategies.
- Students will respond to mental health themes in script through guided discussion.

NOTE: *It is recommended to facilitate these sessions consecutively (or as soon as possible) in order for students to remember key details about the play.*

Session Plan:

Pre-Checklist:

1. Do you have a community agreement for your class? If not, use the suggested guidelines for discussion below.
2. Identify a counselor or SAFE Coordinator from your school. Invite them to class. Get their contact information for students.
3. Practice your own best practices for trigger warnings related to the play's content and discussion. Do you like to give your students a heads up prior to class and always allow for students to step back? Do you share lessons and content with your parents and administrators? Prepare accordingly.
4. Plan to facilitate session one and two consecutively.

Set Up:

As space allows, set up the class in a seated circle, either in chairs or on the ground.

0:00 Check In:

If participants are new to one another, have them introduce themselves and share their pronouns.

Invite students to check in with the following:

What's in a name? For our check in, we are going to go around the circle, saying our names and using a gesture along with our names. The gesture should represent something important about who you are. The rest of the group will repeat the name and gesture of the person who just went. Try to present that movement back with the same energy as you received it.

0:05 Introduction:

If students are already familiar with the *Pieces of Mind* anthology, this section may be skipped.

Today we're going to be reading a short play together from "Pieces of Mind," a play anthology about mental health and wellness. These plays were written by professional playwrights and developed with high school theatre students like you, and are designed to help us explore mental health issues that teenagers face, learn healthy coping mechanisms, and develop resiliency.

0:07 Review of Community Agreement:

If this has already been completed in another session, this section may be skipped or reviewed.

Before we jump into today's materials, review the following guidelines for how to treat one another during this process. Deep and difficult conversations can come up when engaging in any play analysis, and today we'll be discussing content related to wellness and mental health. As we explore the content, let's remember how we want to treat each other during a dialogue.

Ask students to place their hands on their chest and to echo the following after you.

1. Respect others.

2. Respect the process.
3. Respect myself.

Do we feel these are reasonable expectations for us to have for ourselves, and one another? Is there anything that may need to be added, edited, or removed from these points in order for us to take care of ourselves and one another throughout this process? We can always revisit these ideas if we find there is something missing. (Discuss and revise if necessary.)

0:10 Play Reading

Now that we are ready to read the play, I'm going to ask you to have your writing utensils available. As you read, feel free to underline lines or moments in the play that you find interesting, or that make you think.

Introduce today's play, *Strong Friend* by Idris Goodwin.

Pass out copies of script and pencils. Ask for volunteers for reading if not already assigned.
Read script.

0:30 Play Response

Invite students to look back over the script, taking note of the annotations they made. Offer the following questions for discussion:

1. What moments from the play did you find the most meaningful, evocative, interesting, or exciting?
2. If a classmate was absent today and you had to quickly fill them in on what this play was about, what would you say?
3. What is the importance of names in this play?
4. This script is written for two actors to serve as a chorus, representing many people in Hannah's life. How do you imagine this in performance? What impact does this artistic choice have? What might it look like/feel like to expand this ensemble?
5. What did you notice about the rhythm of the play? How do you think the pace helps to show Hannah's emotion?

0:42 Mindfulness Break

Use a Mindfulness Break here as needed.

We've had the chance to read and discuss this play. Exploring a work of theatre can often bring up powerful thoughts and emotions. Let's take a short mindfulness break.

Continue with selected Mindfulness Break from the provided activity bank, or one of your own favorites.

0:45 Check Out: It Makes Me Think

In our next class, we'll continue to explore this play using our skills as theatre artists. To close out today, let's end with "It Makes Me Think" statements. In no more than three words, what has today's play made you think about? This might be something related to mental health, or

theatre. I'll give you a moment to think, and then I'll ask you to share your three words, followed by the phrase "It makes me think." I'll start with an example:

Share an example, such as, "Words matter: It makes me think" or, "Power of community: It makes me think."

Give a moment to think. Hear all students if time allows, or allow time to share with a partner.

Session Two

STRONG FRIEND

Today's Learning Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect play content to real life mental health contexts To physicalize some of the story, characters, and emotions from the play
Theatre Vocabulary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tableau Chorus Levels Ensemble Dialogue Facial Expression Gesture Spatial Relationship Transition
Mental Health Topic(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety Depression
Materials:	copies of script; writing utensils; chart paper and markers; soft ball or object to pass around the circle
Session Length:	50 minutes

Session at a Glance:

In this session, students will create tableaux based on character interactions in the play *Strong Friend* by Idris Goodwin.

Core Theatre Skills and Concepts:

- Tableau
- Devised Theatre
- Directing

Mental Health Connections:

- Creating tableaux physicalizes the pressure Hannah experiences because her family and peers view her as a “rock.” In *The Strong Friend*, she says she is “chipping away” and doesn’t “know what kind of statue [she’ll] become” (Goodwin).

NOTE: This session is designed to follow as closely as possible to Session One to allow for students to remember key details about the play.

Session Plan:

Set Up:

- Create an open space that allows for movement.
- On the chart paper, draw a basic outline of a person's body. This will represent the character of Hannah.

0:00 Check In: The Opposite of Myself

Begin with students in a standing circle with their scripts and a writing utensil.

It's nice to be back together in this space. Look around at everyone here and give a silent greeting.

Now check in with yourself. Today we're going to be creating tableaux, or frozen images, with our faces and bodies. Let's practice this with our check in. First, I'm going to ask you to create an individual tableau that represents how others see you (examples: shy, helpful, or life of the party).

Model an example. Give students thinking time, and then a countdown from 3 to show their tableau.

Now, create an individual tableau that represents how you'd like to be – or how you would like others to see you (examples: free, outgoing, charming).

Model an example. Give students thinking time, and then a countdown from 3 to show their tableau.

Have students move back and forth between their first tableau and their second tableau. *Think about how different these two tableaux feel.*

In our last session, we read The Strong Friend by Idris Goodwin. Who can remind us what this play was about? How does it relate to this exercise? (Gather student responses.)

0:05 Role on the Wall

Let's continue thinking about these ideas – how others view us, and how we want to be seen – as we continue to analyze Hannah's character. I have a picture of a person on this poster board. This will represent Hannah. Let's pull some lines from the play to show what Hannah thinks of herself and how others see her.

Give students two minutes to look back through the script, looking for examples of how other characters view Hannah. After two minutes, ask for volunteers to share the quotes they found. Write these on the outside of Hannah's body.

Give students two minutes to look for lines that illustrate how Hannah views herself, or wants others to view her. After two minutes, ask for volunteers to share. Write these on the inside of Hannah's body.

0:15 Cover the Space

Let's keep exploring these ideas as we break into groups.

Invite students to “cover the space,” moving around the open area at a neutral pace, without falling into a circle or pattern. Give students a five count to get to a partner.

With your partner, create a tableau—a frozen image—based on the word “Strong.”

Give partners a 10-second countdown to create this image. Once partners have made their tableaux, make observations about what you observe. Point out choices with facial expressions, levels, and spatial relationships.

Now, staying with their partners, invite students to cover the space again. Give them a five count to find another set of partners (creating groups of four).

With your group of four, create a tableau based on the word “Rock.”

Give a 10-second countdown for groups to create this image. Make observations about what you observe.

0:20 Tableau

In that exercise, you all used your bodies to portray the ideas “Strong” and “Rock” through tableaux. Now, we are going to create tableaux from moments of the play in our small groups.

Provide groups with six minutes to create two tableaux based on the following:

1. Tableau One: A tableau that represents how others view Hannah, based on one of the lines written outside of Hannah’s body in the Role on the Wall exercise.
2. Tableau Two: A tableau that represents how Hannah views herself, based on one of the lines written inside of Hannah’s body in the Role on the Wall exercise.

Circulate around groups. Possible sidecoaching might include:

- *How can you use levels to illustrate his moment? (or facial expression, angles, gesture, spatial relationship, etc.)*
- *What can you do to create greater contrast between your two tableaux?*
- *How can we tell which characters are being presented even without dialogue?*
- *How can you include everyone in your group?*

After six minutes, invite groups to consider the transition between Tableau One and Tableau Two. This transition should last a full 10-count, moving creatively from one tableau to the next (rather than taking the most direct path). Possible sidecoaching might include:

- *How does your transition between tableaux represent the challenges Hannah faces to express her feelings?*
- *How might tempo be a part of your transition? How can you use your full 10-counts?*

After two minutes, provide one last opportunity for all groups to practice. Call out “Tableau One,” provide a 10-count for transition, then call out “Tableau Two.”

0:30 Sharing

Invite groups to share. Groups should share the lines they selected before presenting.

Look for the levels that are used. What emotions can we see on the characters' faces? What artistic choices do you notice in the transitions? Pay attention to how you feel as an audience member seeing Hannah experience moments of anxiety. How do we see Hannah and her interactions with others change as the story is told?

0:40 Reflection

Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion after the groups have shared:

- **Describe:** What commonalities did you notice between the groups? What differences did you see?
- **Analyze:** How did creating tableaux help you to connect to the characters in the play? What about watching the tableaux?
- **Relate:** What happened when you physicalized some of the feelings that come up in the play? What did it feel like for those who played the role of Hannah? What feelings came up for members of the chorus? How did we show the pressures someone might feel even when they have to appear to be strong?

0:47 Check Out

Thank you for sharing today. We will close out our session, but I hope that we are able to continue to think about the story of Hannah and how we can give each other grace, described in the play as “goodwill.”

Let's come back to our large circle. I have a ball that will represent “grace.” When you have the ball, I'd like you to share one way you can give grace to yourself or someone else. There are many different ways to show grace. For example, we can be fully present when listening to a friend, be able to forgive or let something go. How can you see your peers as their full selves? How can you make sure you are caring for and giving grace to yourself?

After you share, squeeze the ball before you pass it along to the next person. If you don't want to share your thoughts with the group you can hold the ball close to your heart and put that thought into your body.

Model an example and pass the ball to the next person. Once it returns to you, guide students through three collective breaths.

Pieces of Mind
CURRICULUM GUIDE

APPENDICES



Appendix A: Mindfulness Break Bank

Mindfulness Breaks are 1 to 3-minute activities that allow participants to release energy, shake off emotions, de-role, or re-center for the next activity. These activities can be dropped into lessons as needed.

List of activities:

1. Five-Finger Breathing
2. Shake and Release
3. Progressive Muscle Relaxation
4. Guided Imagery
5. Five Senses
6. Let's Go For A Run!
7. Grounding Wave Ride
8. Affirmations
9. Chair Yoga
10. Square Breathing
11. Element Breathing
12. STOP Method
13. Three Breath Focus
14. Check-In Questions
15. Mindful Listening
16. Mindful Stretching
17. Drawing to Music

1. Five-Finger Breathing

Spread your hand and trace the outline of your fingers while taking deep breaths. As you trace up, take a deep breath in, as you move down a finger, take a deep breath out. When you are finished tracing, you will have taken 5 deep breaths.

2. Shake and Release

Discharge energy by imagining that you can physically shake off any thoughts or emotions you would like to release. Start by shaking your arms, then your legs, then your whole body. Finish by physically brushing off the energy from top to bottom.

3. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Guide your students through the following relaxation exercise:

Find a comfortable seated position, either on your chair or on the floor. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in, filling your lungs, and exhale slowly, releasing any tension in your body.

Now, we will focus on tensing and releasing different muscle groups. As I mention each muscle group, I want you to tense that area as tightly as you can for a few seconds, and then release the tension completely, allowing the muscles to relax.

Let's start with our hands. Clench your fists tightly, feeling the tension in your fingers and palms. Hold it... and now, release, letting your hands go completely relaxed.

Move your attention to your arms. Tense your biceps by flexing your muscles, feeling the tightness. Hold it... and now, release, letting your arms become loose and limp.

Next, let's focus on our shoulders. Raise them up towards your ears, creating tension in your shoulder muscles. Hold it... and now, release, allowing your shoulders to drop down, feeling the relaxation spreading through your upper body.

Now, tighten your facial muscles by scrunching up your face. Squeeze your eyes shut, clench your jaw, and wrinkle your forehead. Hold it... and now, release, letting go of any tension in your face, allowing your facial muscles to soften.

Lastly, bring your attention to your legs. Point your toes and tense your leg muscles, feeling the tightness in your calves and thighs. Hold it... and now, release, feeling your legs becoming loose and relaxed.

Take a moment to notice the sensation of relaxation spreading throughout your body. Breathe deeply, allowing yourself to fully relax and let go of any remaining tension.

When you're ready, slowly open your eyes and bring your awareness back to the present moment.

4. Guided Imagery

Guide your students through the following imagery exercise:

We're going to engage in a guided imagery activity to help ease anxiety and promote a sense of calm. Find a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down, and close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so.

Take a moment to focus on your breath. Breathe in deeply through your nose, and exhale slowly through your mouth, setting aside any tension or worries.

Now, imagine yourself in a peaceful and serene place. Picture a location where you feel safe, relaxed, and content. It could be a beach, a forest, a meadow, or any setting that brings you a sense of tranquility.

Take some time to vividly imagine the details of this place. Notice the colors, the sounds, and the smells. Feel the temperature of the air and the sensation of the ground beneath you. Engage all your senses to make the image as vivid as possible.

As you immerse yourself in this calming environment, let go of any thoughts or worries that might be occupying your mind. Allow yourself to be fully present in this moment of peace and relaxation.

Take a deep breath in, inhaling the tranquility of this place, and as you exhale, release any tension or stress that you may be feeling.

Stay in this serene setting for a few more moments, enjoying the sense of calm it brings you. If your mind starts to wander, gently guide your attention back to the imagery you've created.

When you're ready, slowly bring your awareness back to the present moment. Wiggle your fingers and toes, stretch your body gently, and take one last deep breath.

Open your eyes, and take a moment to notice how you feel after this guided imagery exercise. Remember, you can return to this mental oasis anytime you need to find calm.

5. Five Senses

This exercise uses your senses to ground you in the present moment. Begin in a comfortable seated position, with eyes closed or softly focused in front. Take a deep breath in and out. Bring your awareness to your surroundings. Without speaking, identify:

- Five things you can see,
- Four things you can hear,
- Three things you can feel,
- Two things you can smell, and
- One thing you can taste.

Finish this exercise with another deep breath in and out.

6. Let's Go for a Run!

As a group, run in place for 10 seconds. Imagine running away from anything negative and running towards safety and positivity. As a group, count aloud from 10 to 1 while running.

7. Grounding Wave Ride

This exercise combines the imagery of a beach with the mindfulness of riding waves to help you stay grounded and centered in the present.

Today, we're going to practice the "Grounding Wave Ride," a mindful exercise to help you stay grounded and centered.

Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down. You can decide whether to close your eyes or keep them softly open, whatever feels right for you.

Begin with some deep breaths. Inhale slowly through your nose, and then exhale gently through your mouth. Feel the rhythm of your breath as it brings you into the present moment.

Now, imagine you're standing on the shore of a calm beach. Picture the soft sand under your feet, the gentle breeze on your skin, and the sound of the waves in the distance.

As you take a moment to observe your surroundings, become aware of your own body. Feel your feet firmly planted on the ground, just like your feet on the sandy beach.

Now, visualize any worries or distractions as waves in the ocean. They rise, they peak, and then they settle back down. You're going to ride these waves mindfully.

Notice how your body feels when these "distraction waves" come. Do you feel tense or anxious? Acknowledge these sensations without trying to change them.

If your mind starts to wander or other thoughts come up, that's okay. Simply think of them as "thinking waves." No need to judge them.

As the waves of distractions come and go, remind yourself that, just like ocean waves, they will naturally calm down. Continue to breathe slowly and mindfully as you ride these waves. Watch how they change over time.

While you're on this wave ride, you can say to yourself, "I am grounded" or "I am centered."

Remember, distractions can be challenging, but they are temporary. Keep watching the distractions and how your body feels without reacting.

After a while, you'll notice that the distractions start to fade, just like the waves settling back into the ocean. Keep breathing mindfully until you feel grounded and centered.

When you've reached that grounded state, take a moment to appreciate the sense of calm and focus you've found.

8. Affirmations

Invite students to sit or stand in a way that's comfortable to them. Lead them through the following call and response:

- *I am enough.*
- *I am confident.*
- *I can choose positive thoughts.*

- *I am capable.*
- *I can do difficult things.*

Feel free to create your own or brainstorm with your students.

9. Chair Yoga

Guide students through a simple yoga sequence they can do from their seats.

Sit tall in your chair with your arms and hands on your side, legs uncrossed, and feet planted to the ground. Take a deep breath in and out. Slowly inhale and lift your arms up to the sky. As you exhale, lower your arms back to your side. (Repeat two or three times).

Return to your tall, sitting positions. On your next inhale, place your hands behind your head. As you exhale, gently lean your torso to the right. Inhale, return to center. Exhale, lean your torso to the left. (Repeat two or three times).

Return to your tall, sitting positions. On your next inhale, lift your arms up to the sky and press the palms of your hands together. Exhale, keep your palms together and bring your hands down to your chest. While holding this position, let's take a couple of deep breaths together. In, and out.

10. Square Breathing

If possible, have students in an open body position. They could sit in a chair with feet flat on the floor, lie down, or sit in a meditative position.

- Start with an exhale and let all of your air out.
- Slowly inhale through your nose while counting to 4.
- Hold your breath for the count of 4.
- Exhale through your mouth with a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a 4 count.

Imagine drawing a line of a square with each 4-count. If it helps, you can use your fingers to outline the square in front of you.

11. Element Breathing

This strategy helps us take in elements from the earth and consider how they might guide or support us in our work. Begin with one element: Earth, Air, Water, or Fire. This exercise may be repeated with a different element to work on each day.

Name the element - in this example, Earth. Ask students to offer words that embody what they need from Earth to support them. For example, students might say “grounded” or “steady.” Ask students to pick one of these suggestions, or their own word, for the remainder of the exercise. Ask students to breathe in on the count of four and out on the count of four. Guide student breathing by counting slowly with a steady beat: In-2-3-4, and (Out-2-3-4). As students continue to breathe, ask them to focus on the element during the inhale (i.e. “Earth”) and what they need from that element (i.e. (Steadiness”) on the inhale.

Repeat this as a guided meditation ritual for multiple days using different elements. It is okay if students' words change from day to day.

12. STOP Method

(S) Stand up and breathe.

(T) Tune into your body. Notice how it feels, and any physical sensations.

(O) Observe. What is your body telling you?

(P) Ask what’s possible. What new possibilities might emerge if you can connect with yourself in this moment? How might this be a turning point for the rest of the day?

13. Three Breath Focus

In this activity, the instructor will lead the group through three deep breaths.

1. For the first breath, have everyone close their eyes or find a point of soft focus. They will bring their hand up to just below the face, palms up, on the inhale. On the exhale, they will push their hands down to their toes, palms down. Ask students to use this breath to focus on silently acknowledging how they feel in this moment.
 2. Repeat this movement with their second breath. Ask them to silently identify what they want to bring to this moment.
 3. For the third breath, students will be invited to open their eyes on the exhale and move their palms out in front, towards the group. Ask students to focus on the energy they want to gift to the others in the room.
-

14. Check-in Questions

Ask students to close their eyes and reflect on the following three questions:

1. How am I feeling right now in my body?
 2. How am I feeling right now in my emotions?
 3. What do I want to get out of today’s session?
-

15. Mindful Listening

Ask students to sit in a relaxed posture, either on chairs or on the floor, with their eyes closed or softly focused.

Begin by explaining the concept of mindful listening. Emphasize that the goal is to be fully present and attentive to the sounds around them without judgment.

Start with a few moments of silence. Encourage students to notice any sounds in the environment, whether they are near or far. It could be the hum of a computer, distant chatter, or the rustling of leaves.

After the silent period, introduce a specific sound for them to focus on. It could be a bell chime, the sound of water, or even gentle instrumental music. Instruct them to pay close attention to the sound from the beginning to the end. Pause while the sound plays.

As the sound fades away, continue sitting in silence for another moment, noticing any lingering sensations or impressions from the experience.

When you're ready, start to bring your awareness back to your physical body and surroundings. Wiggle your fingers and toes, take a deep breath, and gently blink your eyes open. Notice how you feel after this practice of mindful listening.

We'll now transition to our next activity, but feel free to carry this sense of calm presence with you.

16. Mindful Stretching

Find a comfortable and quiet space to stand. Take a few deep breaths to center yourself. Begin with gentle neck stretches, moving your head from side to side and forward and backward. Progress to shoulder rolls, lifting and rolling your shoulders in a circular motion. Extend your arms and stretch them overhead, reaching towards the sky. Engage in mindful stretching, paying attention to the sensations in your muscles as you move. Transition into slow and deliberate body twists, feeling the gentle rotation in your torso. Move to leg stretches, lifting one knee at a time towards your chest, holding briefly, and then switching. Conclude with a few mindful deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling slowly.

17. Drawing to Music

Hand out a piece of paper and writing and drawing utensils to students.

For this activity, I'm going to play a short song. On your piece of paper, you are going to draw, write, or doodle whatever the music inspires you to. This exercise is not about creating the most beautiful piece of art. You don't have to draw something perfectly and it doesn't need to make

sense. Doodles, lines, scribbles, rough sketches, dots are fine. The goal is to constantly be drawing, scribbling, doodling for the whole song so that we have a visual interpretation of what the song makes you feel like. Ready? Go.

Play a song that your students find joyful, calming, or relaxing. Some suggestions include: *Romantic Flight* by John Powell, *Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity* from *The Planets* suite by Gustav Holst, or *Claire de Lune* by Claude Debussy. Feel free to shorten or extend this activity as needed by playing an excerpt of the entirety of a song.

Appendix B: Mental Health Resources

Campus Resources

We recommend notifying any on-campus resources (i.e. guidance counselor or support staff) prior to facilitating this curriculum. This contact information may be posted or shared with students.

National Hotlines:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255 or chat with 988 (Available 24/7)
- American Psychiatric Association Answer Center: 1-888-357-7924 (8:30-6pm EST)
- NAMI Teen & Young Adult HelpLine: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or text “Friend” to 62640 (Mon-Fri, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. ET)
- RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) (Available 24/7)
- LGBT National Youth Talkline: 1-800-246-7743 (Mon-Fri 4pm-12pm ET; Sat 12-5pm ET)
- American Addiction Centers: 1-888-319-2606 (Available 24/7)

Digital Sources:

- [UndocuHealth](#): Mental health resources specifically for undocumented people and immigrants.
- [Teen and Young Adult Resource Directory](#): from the National Alliance on Mental Illness
- [LGBT National Help Center](#)
- [National Eating Disorder Association](#)
- [Resources for Students and Educators](#): videos, coloring sheets, quizzes, and printables from The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).
- [We Think Twice](#): mental health resources designed by teens, for teens.
- [Grief Resources for Teens](#) from the Dougy Center.
- [A Guide to Addiction and Recovery for Teens](#) from the American Addiction Centers.

Appendix C: Sample Parent Notification

Dear Parent:

Your student's [THEATRE OR OTHER SUBJECT AREA] class will be engaging with research-backed plays and curriculum related to mental health and wellness, designed to help high school students develop skills to lead more resilient lives.

Participating in this curriculum includes reading plays from *Pieces of Mind*, an anthology of short plays published through YouthPLAYS, a leading publisher of theatre for youth.

Your student's class will read the following play[S]:

- [PLAY TITLE]

After reading the play[S], students will participate in lessons that focus on a play's dramatic circumstances and fictional characters, allowing students to explore mental health issues safely and productively. These lessons meet multiple National Arts and Common Core English Language Arts standards. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[INSERT ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFO OR PERMISSION SLIP.]

Credits

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