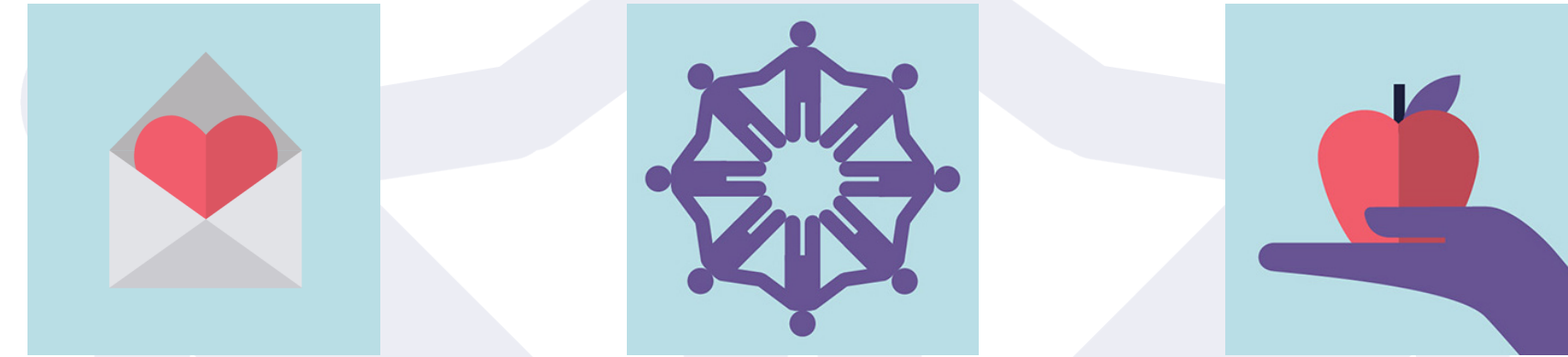




## Compassion & Dignity FOR EDUCATORS

## Coming Back to School with Kindness



Coming back to school can be exciting and overwhelming—even in the best of times. This year may bring continued challenge and uncertainty, along with familiar joys and hopes. We want to support you in staying connected to a sense of wellness for yourself, your students, and your school community.

A team of researchers and educators from the Crown Institute worked together to create these tools to support you in your own wellness and help you stay connected with your students and colleagues with hope, joy, and passion. The tools are intended to be a resource for you whenever you need them. You can use them now or come back to them in moments of opportunity or challenge throughout the year.



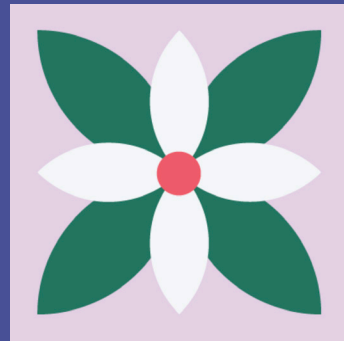
# Being Kind to Yourself

Educators are often focused on how to best support others and may forget to take time for themselves. In times of stress, we too often blame ourselves and lose sight of what we need to care for ourselves. These practices are intended to support you in showing yourself the same kindness you might share with a friend.



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- ✓ Write down a few intentions that can help guide you at the start of this school year, speaking to what you most want for yourself based upon your values and aspirations. Here are some intentions that educators have shared with us:
  - May we have patience and kindness for one another and ourselves during difficult times.
  - May I remember to pause in moments of stress.
  - May I feel times of joy and savor those moments.
- ✓ Make a list of things you like or appreciate about yourself as an educator. If it is hard to think of these, reflect on what a student or colleague appreciates about you, or what brought you to teaching.
- ✓ Write a kind note to yourself and put it on your desktop as a reminder to be kind to yourself. Here are some ideas of notes educators have shared with us:
  - I am enough.
  - I am doing the best I can right now; that's all I can ask.
  - The work I do matters, even when it is difficult and challenging.
- ✓ When the world around you is overwhelming, it can be helpful to:
  - Take things one moment at a time, paying attention to sensations of:
    - Breathing at the belly, chest, or nostrils, one breath at a time, inhaling and exhaling with awareness.
    - Eating, one taste at a time, noticing colors, flavors, textures, aromas, and more.
    - Hearing, moment by moment, listening to sounds occurring naturally around you or in music that you love.
  - Connect with nature:
    - Step outside and feel the warm sun or cool breeze on your skin, or look out a window and notice the colors of the sky or world around you.
    - Remind yourself that you are part of a larger world.
  - Talk with a colleague you trust:
    - Ask them for time to talk.
    - Share how you are feeling.
    - Offer the same in return, listening with presence without offering advice or a solution.



# Being Kind to Your Students

These tools are intended to help you cultivate and deepen your relationships with students. We imagine you are already doing many of these things. Using these tools can help to celebrate kindness in your classroom.



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## ✓ Deepen connections with your students:

- Welcome every student into your classroom with a personal greeting.
- Create a document with the name of each of your students. Keep notes about things that each student shares that are meaningful to them, such as aspects of their culture, language, family members, pets, favorite foods, and colors. Bring these aspects of their lives into conversation and your teaching. If you don't have anything to write down, set an intention to pay more attention to that student the next day.
- Include personal notes to students when handing back assignments. Make sure feedback to them makes clear their strengths as well as how to improve (if improvement is needed).
- Share with your students that it is okay to feel nervous or to experience stress at the start of the year and that you are there to support them.
- Create lessons that connect to the interests, life experiences, and identities of students so that they can see themselves in the subject matter.

## ✓ Set an intention for kindness in the morning before school starts:

- Write down a few intentions for bringing kindness into your classroom.
- Write down a few intentions for specific students, expressing what you most want them to experience that day.

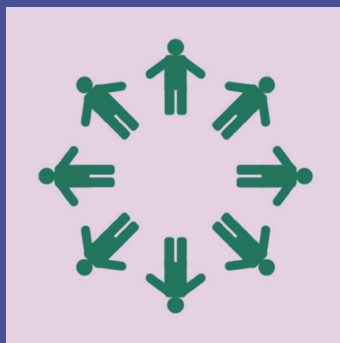
## ✓ Hold kindness in your heart:

- Think of a student in your class, write down something that you appreciate about them, hold that appreciation in your heart.

## ✓ Send a silent wish of kindness:

- To a student whom you know well.
- To a student whom you don't know well.
- To a student who may be having a hard time.





# Being Kind to Your Colleagues

These tools are intended to support your wellness as an educator and to help you cultivate and deepen your relationships with colleagues.



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- ✓ Deepen connections with your colleagues:
  - Text a colleague a few things that you appreciate about them.
  - Leave a sticky note of appreciation on a colleague's desk.
  - Ask how a colleague is doing and make intentional time for engaged listening.
- ✓ Share an inspiring quote with a colleague that brings you a sense of ease and joy.
- ✓ Send silent wishes for your collective work as educators:
  - May our work together benefit students, families, and educators.
  - May our work bring a sense of peace and community for those who feel alone.
  - May the benefit of our work radiate out and connect to those who need it.
  - May we know that our perseverance, compassion, and care are important.
- ✓ Send a silent wish of kindness:
  - To a colleague whom you know well.
  - To a colleague whom you don't know well.
  - To a colleague who may be having a hard time.