

Mental Health Reading Activity for K-3 Grade

Mindful Mantras: I Will Be Okay!

This interactive reading activity is designed for students in grades K-3 and provides educators with opportunities to help students develop social-emotional intelligence and reduce mental health stigma by introducing mental health challenges that children sometimes face.

A link to purchase the book, the book's synopsis, and an activity guide with discussion questions have been provided to help facilitate the activity, create dialogue and teach strategies, tools and skills that help to develop resilience, mindfulness, positive self-talk, self-esteem/confidence-building, acceptance and compassion for oneself and others, as well as teach students how to be a supportive friend and that it's okay to ask for help.

BOOK DETAILS

[*Mindful Mantras: I Will Be Okay!*](#) by Laurie Wright

Max shares a series of situations that lead him to feel strong emotions and ask, "Will I be okay?" For each scenario, Max brainstorms ways he might cope, then reassures himself with the affirmation, "I will be okay." This simple, concrete, and relatable story lends itself to chanting along and making the OK hand sign each time the affirmation appears, helping readers internalize confidence-building self-talk.

Emphasis: Social-Emotional Development

Diversity Notes: Shows Caucasian, able-bodied, male and some female characters

Relationships: Skunk pal, peers/friends, Mom, Dad, babysitter, unnamed support adults

ACTIVITY + QUESTIONS

Read the Story:

1. Before you begin, let students know that this lesson is about understanding that we will always be okay, even if we have a difficult situation or big feelings, and review your classroom's norms to ensure that students feel respected and safe.
2. Invite students to raise their hands silently if they've ever felt the way Max describes.
3. Have students make the Okay sign and chant "I will be okay," each time Max says it.

4. Select which situations to share and skip others if the story is too long for your class.
5. When Max says, "I can try to eat something, that helps a lot," emphasize that Max is unsure about how he's feeling, so he tries a healthy snack to check if hunger is the reason he's so confused, rather than that he is eating as a way to self-soothe.

Discussion + Activities:

1. Help students connect with the concepts to be explored by writing/drawing individually, or sharing aloud in pairs, small groups, or whole class, their responses to:
 - Have you ever had a situation that made you ask yourself, "Will I be okay?"
 - How do you remember feeling in that situation?
2. Consider vocabulary that students might generate or that you might opt to introduce:
 - feelings: sad, scared, worried, frustrated, upset, nervous, anxious, confused, discouraged, overwhelmed, mad, lonely, grumpy, unsure...
3. What were some of the situations that made Max feel like he might not be okay?
4. What ideas did Max come up with to handle his tough situations and feelings?
5. Write or draw a situation you find difficult.
 - What feelings, body sensations, or thoughts do you have?
 - What are some things you can do to let yourself know that you will be okay?