

SEL Book Bag

Title: The Hugging Tree Dawna Brandt

Author: Jill Neimark

Grade Levels: 3rd

SEL Competency: Self-Management

SEL Student SWBAT: Learn how to cope well with stress and anxiety. Persevere by expending additional effort, and/or seeking help from others.

Book summary: A little tree ends up on a cliff and must grow there. She finds comfort in the sea and the moon, support from loons, and connection and warmth from the people sitting in her shade. The Hugging Tree is a poetic and peaceful story that aims to teach children about hope and resilience. Rather than a lonely tree on a lonely cliff, the tree represents community and a place to get in touch with inner hopes and dreams.

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/magination/441B157-teacher-guide.pdf>

This is a link to a 28 page Teacher's Classroom Guide

Activity Materials:

- Crayons, markers, paint, colored pencils
- Paper
- stuffed animal (ask students to bring in advance) for breathing exercise
- soft balls or other items to toss

Directions:

1. Draw yourself as a tree. Draw lots of roots, and write at the bottom of each root one of your good qualities. At the top of the leaves, write your dreams for your life--things you want, whether it's a summer vacation, a new bike, a pet. How does it feel knowing that your roots and strength come from all your good qualities? How does it feel thinking about your dreams?

Play Rain Forest Meditation while students are making their tree. You tube Most relaxing music ever--Rain Forest Meditation.

2. As a class, discuss how the hugging tree was resilient. What obstacles did she have to overcome? How did she overcome those obstacles? What obstacles do you face in life? Have you ever been bullied or teased by someone (your brothers, sisters, or

classmates)? How did you feel? Were you able to talk to your parents about it? Your friends?

3. Do you know how to calm your emotions through mindfulness exercises? Here are some mindfulness exercises: A. Try the breathing buddy exercise here. Each student takes a stuffed animal to be their breathing buddy, and then lies down on their back with their buddy on their belly. They focus their attention on the rise and fall of the stuffed animal as they breathe in and out. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scqFHGI_nZE

4. Invite your students to measure their personal resiliency with one of these quizzes: <http://pbskids.org/arthur/health/resilience/quiz.html>

5. Have your students participate in a group juggling activity to emphasize working together to deal with stress, managing multiple things at the same time, and making and learning from mistakes. Preparation: You will need 8 to 10 objects that are easy to throw and catch. Game Instructions: 1. Ask your students to stand in a circle. Explain that you are going to throw an object to someone in the circle. Then, that person will throw the object to someone else in the circle who has not caught the object yet. Tell the students that they need to remember who they got the object from and who they throw it to. The object should be thrown and caught until everyone in the circle has participated and the object is thrown back to you. Notes: You may want people who have not caught the object to hold their hands out in front of them so students can tell who is left to throw to. You will also want to set expectations for how the objects will be thrown and caught by demonstrating an underhand throw while calling the name of the person you are throwing to. 2. Ask the students to name something in their life that they have to juggle or take care of every day. Write one of the answers on a piece of tape and stick it on one of the objects. Write other answers on tape and stick them on the other objects you have collected. Answers may include: school, homework, chores, friends, sports, family, etc.