A GRADES 9–12 SEL CURRICULUM

Becoming Your Whole Self

Powered by the BECOME Pathway

Eight advisory-ready SEL lessons for the realities of high school — stress and anxiety, identity, relationships and consent, real-stakes decisions, mental health literacy, and life after graduation. Built on **The Compass Check-In** and aligned with the CASEL 5 Competencies and Massachusetts DESE guidance. Includes a dedicated mental health literacy lesson, tiered supports, assessments, and original student worksheets and family handouts.

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How to Use This Curriculum

These eight lessons are built for the high-school advisory, health class, or SEL block. Each follows a **Connect** → **Learn** → **Apply** rhythm: a real prompt that earns trust, a skill taught with honesty and depth, and applied practice — discussion, writing, or scenario work — that students can use immediately. The lessons move from self-awareness and stress management into the issues that define high school: relationships and consent, real-stakes decisions, mental health, and the transition to adulthood.

Why High-School SEL Is Different

By high school, students are forming adult identities, managing genuine stress, navigating relationships, and making decisions with real consequences. It is also the developmental window when most lifelong mental health conditions first emerge — making recognition, stigma reduction, and help-seeking essential (Jorm, 2012).[1] Well-implemented SEL is linked to stronger skills, behavior, and achievement across this age range, with effects that persist for years (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). The Compass Check-In carries forward, matured, with a fifth direction — **Drift** — for the checked-out, disconnected feeling.

The Meeting Rhythm

1. **Connect** — A real, low-stakes prompt that invites honesty and builds trust.
2. **Learn** — Teach one concrete SEL skill with adolescent depth and credibility.
3. **Apply** — Practice through seminar discussion, writing, or realistic scenarios.
4. **Carry It Forward** — Name how students will use the skill in real life.

Respect their autonomy. High schoolers engage when they're treated as near-adults: give real choice, invite genuine debate, keep reflection private when it's personal, and never use the Compass to label or rank. Credibility is earned through honesty, not authority.

[1] Citations support the framing of this curriculum. The Compass Check-In and all lessons, activities, worksheets, and handouts are original works of Becoming U Wellness. See the References section.

The Signature Tool · The Compass Check-In

Instead of asking whether a feeling is "good" or "bad," the Compass asks: **"Where is my compass pointing right now — and what helps me navigate back to Center?"** Students **Notice** → **Name** → **Navigate**: notice the signal, name the direction without judgment, choose a strategy to steer back to Center — and recognize when a feeling is too big to navigate alone, and reaching out is the strong move.

The Compass Check-In is an original Becoming U Wellness framework, informed by the research base on emotional self-awareness and self-regulation (CASEL, 2020). It is not derived from any proprietary curriculum.

Direction	What It Feels Like	Body / Mind Signals	Examples
CENTER	Grounded, focused, regulated.	Steady, present, clear thinking.	Calm, content, motivated.
REST	Low energy, withdrawn, flat.	Fatigue, low motivation, isolating.	Down, drained, discouraged.
RUSH	Revved up, on edge, racing.	Racing thoughts, tension, irritability.	Anxious, stressed, overwhelmed.
STORM	Flooded, overwhelming.	Panic, uncontrollable anger, shutdown.	Panic, rage, despair.
DRIFT	Checked-out, numb, disconnected.	Detachment, dissociation, going through motions.	Numb, apathetic, disengaged.

Know the handoff. A compass stuck in Storm, Rest, or Drift for days or weeks — especially with hopelessness or withdrawal — is a signal a student needs more than self-regulation. Know your referral pathway and involve a counselor (see Lesson 6 and the safety note).

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Lesson 1

Know Yourself
Identity & Self-Awareness

Emotional precision, values, and a clear-eyed sense of identity as the foundation for everything else.

Connect

Ask: When people describe you, what do they get right — and what do they miss? Who are you when no one's watching?

Learn

High school is identity-defining. The work starts with **self-awareness**: naming emotions precisely (**emotional granularity**), understanding your **values**, and recognizing the patterns that move your compass. People who can name what they feel regulate it better.

We separate **identity** (who you are, your values and commitments) from **reputation** (what others think), and notice how social media blurs the two. Using the Compass, students map their internal states honestly and identify personal early-warning signals that they're leaving Center.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Values in Action	Identify core values; trace where they show up in real choices.	Write a personal values statement; analyze a decision where values clashed.
Identity vs. Reputation	Discuss the gap between who you are and how you're seen.	Reflect on how curated identity online affects self-perception.
Compass Patterns	Track the compass for a week; find personal patterns.	Analyze triggers and design a personal early-warning plan.

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** A reflective piece on a value you've had to defend.
- **Seminar:** Where does identity come from — choice, circumstance, or both?
- **Perspective-taking:** How might someone misjudge you, and why?
- **Problem-solving:** Name a precise emotion for several complex situations.
- **Peer dialogue:** Share a value and a time it cost you something.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Emotional granularity	Naming feelings precisely	"It was dread, not just stress."
Identity	Your values, commitments, and sense of self	"My identity isn't my follower count."
Values	What matters most and guides choices	"Integrity is a value I act on."

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Reputation	What others believe about you	“Reputation and identity aren’t the same.”
Self-awareness	Understanding your emotions and patterns	“Self-awareness caught my Drift early.”

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Reflection	Writing shows precise emotional language and genuine self-insight.
Performance Task	Map a real situation to a Compass direction and values-aligned response.
Discussion	Students distinguish identity from reputation with examples.
Self-Assessment	Students name patterns and a personal early-warning signal.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***Build self-awareness language for all students.***	Daily/weekly Compass check-in; values work; identity discussion; model self-awareness.	Private written check-ins; varied entry points for reluctant sharers.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students who struggle to name or regulate emotion.***	Small-group emotion-vocabulary and pattern work; guided reflection.	Sentence frames; one-to-one reflective conferences.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Individualized support.***	One-on-one work linking cues, patterns, and regulation; counselor partnership.	Personalized self-awareness goals; check-in/check-out.

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Lesson 2

Managing the Load
Stress, Anxiety & Focus

Understanding stress and anxiety, building a real toolkit, and using executive function to manage a demanding load.

Connect

Ask: What's actually driving your stress right now — and is it acute (one big thing) or chronic (a constant background hum)?

Learn

High schoolers carry real stress: coursework, jobs, college, family, social life. We distinguish **acute** from **chronic stress**, and normal stress from **anxiety** that lingers or interferes with daily life — the line where support helps.

We build an evidence-informed toolkit: paced breathing, grounding, movement, and **cognitive reframing**. We add **executive-function** tools — planning, chunking, prioritizing — to manage workload across classes, and we name the difference between healthy coping and avoidance. Match tools to your Compass: Rush and Storm need regulation first; Rest and Drift may need activation and connection.

> **Worksheet included.** See "My Stress Audit," "Reframe It," and "Workload Map" in the worksheet pack.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Stress vs. Anxiety	Map the difference; identify when support is warranted.	Design a personal stress-management plan for a high-demand stretch.
Reframe Lab	Practice cognitive reframing on real stressors.	Identify personal thinking traps; build counter-statements.
Executive Function	Use planning and chunking on one real assignment.	Build a cross-course workload-management system; test it for two weeks.

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** "My relationship with stress — what helps, what doesn't."
- **Seminar:** When does stress stop being normal and start needing support?
- **Perspective-taking:** How does stress look different from the outside?
- **Problem-solving:** Match tools to each Compass direction.
- **Peer dialogue:** Trade one executive-function strategy that works.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Acute stress	Short-term stress from a specific demand	“Acute stress before finals.”
Chronic stress	Ongoing stress that builds over time	“Chronic stress wore me down.”
Anxiety	Worry that lingers or interferes with life	“My anxiety needed real support.”
Cognitive reframing	Re-interpreting a situation more accurately	“I reframed the catastrophe.”
Executive function	Skills for planning, focus, self-control	“EF tools saved my workload.”

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Performance Task	Demonstrate two regulation strategies; explain when to use each.
Project	A personal stress-management or executive-function plan with self-review.
Reflection	Writing shows tools matched to Compass states.
Observation	Students use tools before escalation and seek support appropriately.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***All students build regulation and EF skills.***	Teach strategies in calm moments; model use; embed EF tools in real coursework.	Scaffolded planning tools; deeper systems for students ready to extend.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students with high stress or weak EF.***	Small-group practice; personal tools card; reframing coaching.	Structured planners; rehearse strategies before high-demand periods.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Individualized support.***	One-on-one regulation/EF plan; counselor collaboration.	Frequent check-ins; coordinate with families and support staff.

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Lesson 3

Real Relationships Boundaries & Consent

Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, boundaries, consent, and communicating through conflict.

Connect

Ask: What does a healthy relationship — any kind: friend, family, dating — actually look like day to day? What are the warning signs of an unhealthy one?

Learn

Relationships get more complex in high school. Healthy ones share respect, trust, honesty, and equality; unhealthy ones show **red flags** — control, pressure, isolation, disrespect. Recognizing the difference protects wellbeing.

We practice setting and respecting **boundaries** (limits that protect us — time, body, emotional, digital) and treat **consent** as ongoing, mutual, freely given, and revocable across everyday and relational contexts. We use assertive communication and **repair** after conflict — and name when to step away from a harmful situation and seek help.

> **Educator note.** Follow your district policy and family-engagement norms for relationships and consent content. Keep examples age-appropriate; disclosures of harm follow mandated-reporting procedures — know your obligations before teaching.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Healthy / Unhealthy / Abusive	Place behaviors on a spectrum; discuss respect and power.	Analyze a case study for red and green flags; identify where to get help.
Boundary Scripts	Practice clear, kind boundary statements across contexts.	Map personal boundaries; rehearse asserting them under pressure.
Consent in Context	Discuss consent as ongoing and revocable in everyday life.	Analyze realistic scenarios; practice checking in and respecting a no.

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** “A boundary I need to set and why it matters.”
- **Seminar:** Why is consent best understood as ongoing, not one-time?
- **Perspective-taking:** How does it feel to have a boundary set with you?
- **Problem-solving:** Word a clear boundary for a difficult relationship.
- **Peer dialogue:** Practice giving and receiving boundaries respectfully.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Boundary	A limit that protects your wellbeing	“I set a boundary about my time.”
Consent	Freely given, ongoing, revocable agreement	“Consent means checking in, every time.”
Red flag	A warning sign of an unhealthy pattern	“Controlling who I see is a red flag.”
Assertive	Honest and direct while respecting others	“I was assertive about my limit.”
Repair	Restoring a relationship after a rupture	“We repaired after the conflict.”

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Performance Task	State a clear boundary and a consent check-in for a scenario.
Discussion	Students articulate healthy vs. unhealthy relationship markers.
Reflection	Writing explores a boundary with self-respect.
Project	Create a healthy-relationships resource for younger students.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***All students learn boundaries, consent, and healthy markers.***	Teach the spectrum; practice boundary and consent scripts; model respect.	Sentence frames and scenarios; written analysis for extension.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students in relationship difficulty.***	Small-group role-play; coaching; identify trusted adults and resources.	One-to-one scripting; safety-aware planning where relevant.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Individualized support.***	Personalized goals; counselor partnership; follow mandated-reporting steps.	Coordinated support with families and clinical staff as appropriate.

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Lesson 4

High-Stakes Choices
Decisions, Ethics & Risk

Reasoning through real decisions, weighing risk and consequence, and acting from values under pressure.

Connect

Ask: Think of a decision with real consequences you've faced (or will). What made it hard — and what helped you decide?

Learn

High-school decisions carry weight — academic integrity, substances, driving, money, online conduct, relationships. We use a structured process: **pause, check the compass, weigh short- and long-term consequences for self and others, and decide from your values.**

We reason through **ethical dilemmas** where values conflict, examine how persuasion and **social proof** shape risk-taking, and practice resisting pressure while keeping your standing. The goal isn't a script — it's the judgment to choose well when it counts.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Decision Framework	Apply the process to a relatable, real-stakes scenario.	Weigh stakeholders and outcomes in a complex dilemma; defend the choice.
Ethical Dilemmas	Discuss cases where values genuinely conflict.	Debate a nuanced dilemma; ground reasoning in values and evidence.
Pressure & Risk	Analyze how social proof drives risky choices.	Rehearse independent decisions and exit strategies under pressure.

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** "A decision I'm proud of — and the values behind it."
- **Seminar:** When is following the group wise, and when is it dangerous?
- **Perspective-taking:** Who is affected by a choice beyond yourself?
- **Problem-solving:** Map consequences (short and long term) for a real decision.
- **Peer dialogue:** Pressure-test each other's reasoning respectfully.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Consequence	What results from a choice, near and long term	"I mapped the consequences first."
Ethics	Principles of right and fair action	"The ethical dilemma had no clean answer."

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Social proof	Doing something because others do	“Social proof made the risk feel normal.”
Integrity	Acting in line with your values	“Integrity meant owning the mistake.”
Risk	The chance of harm or loss in a choice	“I weighed the risk honestly.”

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Performance Task	Walk a real-stakes decision through the full framework.
Discussion	Students defend an ethical position with sound reasoning.
Reflection	Writing connects a decision to values and consequences.
Role-Play	Students resist escalating pressure while keeping composure.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***All students learn structured decision-making.***	Teach the framework; practice ethical dilemmas; model values-based choices.	Scenario sorting and discussion; written analysis for extension.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students vulnerable to risky choices.***	Small-group decision practice; refusal rehearsal; personal exit plan.	One-to-one coaching; identify trusted people for hard moments.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Individualized support.***	One-on-one decision coaching; build into goals; counselor partnership.	Real-time support around known pressure points; family follow-through.

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Lesson 5

Across Difference
Empathy, Bias & Belonging

Perspective-taking across real difference, recognizing bias, and building inclusive communities.

Connect

Ask: When have you genuinely changed your mind about a person or a group? What made that possible?

Learn

Empathy is a skill, not just a feeling. **Cognitive empathy** is understanding another's perspective; **emotional empathy** is feeling with them. Both build belonging — and both can be practiced.

We examine **implicit bias**, stereotyping, and in-group/out-group dynamics, including our own blind spots, and how they shape who is included. We practice perspective-taking across cultural, social, and ideological difference — including steelmanning views we disagree with — and being an **upstander** who acts to support and include.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Steelman It	State an opposing view as fairly and strongly as possible.	Analyze a contested issue from multiple stakeholder perspectives.
Bias Examined	Explore how implicit bias and stereotypes operate.	Reflect on personal blind spots; study in-group/out-group research.
Upstander Strategies	Develop realistic ways to interrupt bias and exclusion.	Design and rehearse upstander responses for real situations.

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** "A belief I changed — and what changed it."
- **Seminar:** Can we be fair to views we find wrong? How?
- **Perspective-taking:** Argue a position you disagree with, accurately.
- **Problem-solving:** Plan a concrete way to make a space more inclusive.
- **Peer dialogue:** Practice disagreement that stays respectful.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Cognitive empathy	Understanding another's perspective	"Cognitive empathy let me hear them."
Emotional empathy	Feeling with another person	"Emotional empathy moved me to act."
Implicit bias	Automatic, often unaware assumptions	"I examined my implicit bias."
Upstander	Someone who acts to support, not just watch	"I chose to be an upstander."

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Belonging	Feeling accepted and part of a community	“Belonging changed the whole class.”

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Discussion	Students argue a view they disagree with, accurately and charitably.
Performance Task	Role-play an upstander response to a realistic scenario.
Reflection	Writing names a personal bias examined and questioned.
Observation	Students show inclusive behavior and respectful disagreement.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***All students build empathy and inclusion skills.***	Set norms for respectful disagreement; practice perspective-taking and upstander moves.	Structured talk protocols; written analysis for extension.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students who struggle socially.***	Small-group practice reading cues and responding; inclusion scripts.	One-to-one coaching; identify safe peers and entry points.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Individualized support.***	Personalized social goals; structured interactions with adult support.	Counselor collaboration; family reinforcement.

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Lesson 6

Mental Health Literacy

Recognizing distress in yourself and others, reducing stigma, and knowing how and when to seek help.

About This Lesson

Mental health literacy is “knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management or prevention” (Jorm et al., 1997, p. 182). Because most lifelong mental health conditions first emerge by mid-adolescence, high school is a decisive window to build recognition, reduce stigma, and strengthen help-seeking (Jorm, 2012). Classroom programs designed for this purpose — such as teen Mental Health First Aid — aim to improve adolescents’ knowledge and attitudes and their ability to support peers and seek help from trusted adults (Hart et al., 2016).[2]

Educator safety note. This lesson teaches *literacy and help-seeking* — it is not therapy and does not train students to diagnose or counsel peers. Deliver it with your school counselor or mental health staff; teach students that the right response to serious distress is to involve a trusted adult, not to manage it alone. Know your referral pathway and mandated-reporting obligations before teaching, and share local and national resources (including the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988 in the U.S.) through your school’s approved channels. If a student is in immediate danger, follow your crisis protocol.

[2] teen Mental Health First Aid is cited as an example of an evidence-based, classroom-based approach; naming it is not an endorsement to deliver it without the program’s own trained instructors and materials (Hart et al., 2016).

Connect

Ask: Where do people your age usually turn first when they're struggling — and what gets in the way of asking for help?

Learn

Mental health exists on a **continuum** — from wellbeing, through distress, to mental illness — and everyone moves along it. We learn to recognize common signs of distress in ourselves and peers, and to separate ordinary stress from signs that warrant support (Jorm, 2012).

We confront **stigma** — the false, unfair beliefs that stop people from reaching out — and reframe **help-seeking** as a strength and a skill. Students build a concrete **help map**: trusted adults, school supports, and crisis resources, and practice supporting a peer with care and boundaries, including the handoff to an adult (Hart et al., 2016).

The Compass as an Early-Warning System

A compass stuck in Storm, Rest, or Drift for days or weeks — not minutes — is a signal that someone may need more support than self-regulation provides. Reaching out is the strong, smart move, for yourself or a friend.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Mental Health Continuum	Map the range from wellbeing to distress to illness.	Discuss what moves people along it and what supports recovery.
Stigma & Language	Analyze stigma in media and everyday language.	Design a stigma-reduction or help-resource campaign for the school.
Notice, Talk, Act	Practice noticing distress and the handoff to an adult.	Rehearse supportive conversations with boundaries (Hart et al., 2016).

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** "What would make it easier for someone my age to ask for help?"
- **Seminar:** Where does mental health stigma come from, and how do we reduce it?
- **Perspective-taking:** Why might a peer hide that they're struggling?
- **Problem-solving:** Map your trusted adults and how to reach each one.
- **Peer dialogue:** Practice supporting a friend while respecting your limits.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Mental health literacy	Knowledge that aids recognition, management, prevention	Jorm et al. (1997): "…aid their recognition, management or prevention."
Mental health continuum	The range from wellbeing to illness	"On the continuum, I'd slid toward distress."
Stigma	Unfair, negative beliefs about mental illness	"Stigma stops people from asking for help."
Help-seeking	Reaching out for support when needed	"Help-seeking is a strength."
Trusted adult	A safe adult who can help you get support	"My counselor is a trusted adult."

Recommended Texts, Media & Discussion Anchors

High-school SEL leans on essays, long-form journalism, film, documentary, podcasts, literature, and current issues. Substitute anchors your school already teaches; preview all media for fit and licensing.

Anchor / Type	Theme	Discussion Prompt
First-person essays on lived experience (teacher-vetted)	Lived experience, stigma	"What barriers to help did this reveal?"
School counselor / clinician guest session	Pathways to support	"What supports exist here, and how do we reach them?"
Reputable youth mental-health organizations (vetted)	Accurate information	"How do we tell credible sources from misinformation?"

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Performance Task	Role-play noticing distress and connecting a peer to a trusted adult.
Reflection	Identify personal trusted adults and warning signs to watch for.
Project	Create a stigma-reduction or help-resource campaign.
Discussion	Students describe the continuum and when to seek help.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***All students build mental health literacy.***	Co-teach with counseling staff; teach the continuum, stigma, and help-seeking; build a class help map.	Varied entry points; private reflection options for personal material.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students showing distress signals.***	Small-group check-ins with support staff; personal help map; warm handoffs.	Individual check-in/check-out; coordinate with families as appropriate.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Intensive, individualized support.***	Counselor- or clinician-led support; follow crisis and reporting protocols.	Coordinated care plan with family and clinical staff.

Teaching this lesson well. Avoid detailed discussion of methods of self-harm; focus on recognition, support, and help-seeking. Center the message: struggling is common and treatable, and reaching out works (Jorm, 2012).

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Lesson 7

Online & Real Digital Life & Identity

Social media, comparison, digital footprint, and protecting wellbeing in a connected world.

Connect

Ask: Be honest — how does your time online affect your mood, sleep, and sense of self? Where does your compass tend to land after a long scroll?

Learn

Our SEL skills apply online. Platforms are engineered for attention and invite **social comparison** — measuring our real lives against others' curated highlights, which often moves the compass toward Rush, Rest, or Drift.

We examine **digital footprint** (what we post is lasting and visible — to colleges, employers, and others), practice pausing before reacting to online conflict, and learn to evaluate sources to avoid spreading **misinformation**. We also set **digital boundaries** that protect sleep, focus, and mental health.

> **Worksheet included.** See "Scroll Audit," "My Digital Footprint," and "Digital Boundaries" in the worksheet pack.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Scroll Audit	Track how time online affects mood and the compass.	Analyze how design features drive comparison and engagement.
Footprint & Reputation	Discuss what lasts and who can see it.	Map a personal footprint; write a personal posting policy.
Boundaries That Stick	Set realistic digital boundaries; plan for slip-ups.	Run a personal digital-wellbeing experiment; reflect on results.

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** "How social media shapes how I see myself."
- **Seminar:** Can you be authentic online? What gets in the way?
- **Perspective-taking:** How might a post land differently than intended?
- **Problem-solving:** Plan a healthy response to online conflict.
- **Peer dialogue:** Share a digital boundary and how you'll keep it.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Digital footprint	The lasting record of your online activity	“Employers can see a footprint.”
Social comparison	Measuring yourself against others online	“Social comparison hurt my mood.”
Misinformation	False or misleading information	“I verified before sharing.”
Digital boundary	A limit that protects your wellbeing online	“No phone after 11 is my boundary.”
Digital citizenship	Acting responsibly and kindly online	“Digital citizenship means pausing first.”

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Project	Draft a personal posting policy or digital-wellbeing plan.
Discussion	Students explain how social comparison affects wellbeing.
Reflection	Writing identifies a digital boundary and its rationale.
Performance Task	Demonstrate a healthy response to an online conflict.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***All students build digital-citizenship and wellbeing skills.***	Teach footprint, comparison, and boundaries; model healthy habits.	Visual supports; written audits and policies for extension.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students affected by online stress or conflict.***	Small-group practice; personal boundary plan; de-escalation rehearsal.	One-to-one coaching; loop in families on device norms.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Individualized support.***	Personalized plan for online stressors; counselor partnership.	Family collaboration; check-ins on wellbeing.

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Lesson 8

What's Next
Future Self & Transition

Growth mindset, meaningful goals, and the social-emotional skills for life after high school.

Connect

Ask: When you picture life after graduation, what excites you and what worries you? What would your future self thank you for starting now?

Learn

Adulthood is close. A **growth mindset** — the belief that ability grows with effort and strategy (Dweck, 2006) — is what turns setbacks into information instead of verdicts. We set **SMART goals**, monitor and revise them, and connect today's effort to a **future self** and post-secondary direction (college, career, training, service).

We name the social-emotional skills adulthood demands — self-advocacy, help-seeking, managing stress and finances, building relationships, and resilience — and we honor that there are many valid paths forward, not one definition of success.

Core Activities

Activity	Approach	Extension
Mindset & Setbacks	Reframe a real setback using growth language (Dweck, 2006).	Analyze the role of effort and strategy in a personal goal.
SMART Goals	Set near-term academic and personal SMART goals.	Build a goal system tied to a post-secondary plan; map milestones.
Future Self & Paths	Explore multiple post-secondary directions honestly.	Draft a plan connecting present skills to a future path; identify supports.

Deeper Practice

Seminar discussion, reflective writing, perspective-taking, applied problem-solving, and structured peer dialogue extend each lesson for high schoolers:

- **Writing:** A letter to your future self, or a setback that taught you something.
- **Seminar:** What does success actually mean — and who gets to define it?
- **Perspective-taking:** How would your future self coach you today?
- **Problem-solving:** Turn a vague hope into a SMART goal with steps and supports.
- **Peer dialogue:** Share a goal and an obstacle; brainstorm strategies.

Vocabulary

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
Growth mindset	Belief that ability grows with effort	"Growth mindset: 'not yet.'" (Dweck, 2006)

Term	Student-Friendly Definition	In Context
SMART goal	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound	“My SMART goal has a deadline.”
Resilience	Recovering and adapting after difficulty	“Resilience is a plan, not just grit.”
Self-advocacy	Speaking up for your own needs	“Self-advocacy got me the help I needed.”
Future self	Who you’re working to become	“I asked what my future self would want.”

Assessment Ideas

Method	What to Look For
Project	A goal plan tied to a post-secondary direction, with milestones and supports.
Reflection	Writing reframes a setback with growth language.
Performance Task	Connect present effort and skills to a future goal.
Observation	Students persist with strategies and advocate for themselves.

Tiered Supports

Tier 1 = universal, for all students. Tier 2 = targeted small-group practice. Tier 3 = individualized, intensive support (Massachusetts DESE, n.d.).

Tier & Focus	Strategies & Activities	Examples of Differentiation
Tier 1 — Universal ***All students learn growth mindset and goal-setting for transition.***	Praise process; teach SMART goals; connect to post-secondary paths; model resilience.	Goal templates; deeper planning for students ready to extend.
Tier 2 — Targeted ***Targeted support for students unsure of their path or who give up easily.***	Small-group goal coaching; reframing; connect to counselors and resources.	One-to-one planning; scaffolded milestone tracking.
Tier 3 — Intensive ***Individualized support.***	Personalized transition and resilience plan; counselor and family partnership.	Coordinated post-secondary planning and support.

Student Worksheets

Twenty printable, original Becoming U worksheets, organized to match the eight lessons. Written for high schoolers — expect reflection, analysis, and planning, with room to make them real.

Worksheet 1 · Values Inventory

Connects to Lesson 1.

Identify your core values, then trace where they show up — or get tested — in real life.

My top 5 values	Where they show up

A time a value cost me something:

Worksheet 2 · Identity vs. Reputation

Connects to Lesson 1.

Reflect on the gap between who you are and how you're seen.

Who I actually am	How I'm sometimes seen

Where does the gap come from, and does it matter to me?

Worksheet 3 · My Compass Patterns

Connects to Lesson 1.

Track your compass for several days. Identify what moves it and what restores Center.

Statement	My answer
What pulls me toward Rush/Storm	
What pulls me toward Rest/Drift	
What brings me back to Center	
My earliest warning signal	

Worksheet 4 · My Stress Audit

Connects to Lesson 2.

Map your current stress: sources, signals, and what actually helps.

My stressors (acute & chronic)	How stress shows up in me

Two evidence-informed tools I'll use:

Worksheet 5 · Reframe It

Connects to Lesson 2.

Catch an unhelpful thought and reframe it more accurately.

Unhelpful thought: _____

Thinking trap (if any): _____

More accurate thought: _____

Worksheet 6 · Workload Map

Connects to Lesson 2.

Use executive-function tools to plan a demanding week.

Statement	My plan
Biggest task this week	
Break it into 3 chunks	
When I'll do each chunk	
What might derail me — and my plan	

Worksheet 7 · Relationship Spectrum

Connects to Lesson 3.

Place behaviors you've seen on the spectrum. Add your own.

Green flags (healthy)	Red flags (unhealthy/abusive)

Worksheet 8 · My Boundaries

Connects to Lesson 3.

Map your boundaries across areas of life, and a script to assert one.

- Time & energy
- Physical/body
- Emotional
- Digital

I value _____. I need _____. Going forward, I'm going to _____.

Worksheet 9 · Consent in Practice

Connects to Lesson 3.

Reflect on what ongoing, mutual consent looks like in everyday and relational contexts.

What does respecting a ‘no’ look like in real life?

How can you check in rather than assume?

Worksheet 10 · Decision Framework

Connects to Lesson 4.

Walk a real-stakes decision through the full process.

The decision:

Pause — where's my compass?

Short-term consequences:

Long-term consequences (self & others):

My values-based choice:

Worksheet 11 · Ethical Dilemma

Connects to Lesson 4.

Reason through a dilemma where values genuinely conflict.

Values pulling one way	Values pulling the other

My reasoned position — and what it costs:

Worksheet 12 · Under Pressure

Connects to Lesson 4.

Plan how you'll hold your ground when social proof or urgency pushes you.

A high-pressure situation I might face:

My exit line / strategy:

A person I can call or stand near:

Worksheet 13 · Steelman It

Connects to Lesson 5.

Pick a view you disagree with. State it as fairly and strongly as its best advocate would.

The view I disagree with:

The strongest, fairest case for it:

What, if anything, did this change in my thinking?

Worksheet 14 · Bias Check & Upstander Plan

Connects to Lesson 5.

Reflect on a personal blind spot and plan a concrete upstander move.

An assumption or bias I've noticed in myself:

- Interrupt a biased comment
- Include someone left out
- Check on a struggling peer
- Amplify a voice that isn't heard

One upstander move I'll make this week:

Worksheet 15 · The Mental Health Continuum

Connects to Lesson 6.

Map the continuum and where ordinary stress ends and support is warranted.

Signs I’m doing well (Center):

Signs of distress to watch for in myself:

Signs that mean it’s time to reach out for support:

Worksheet 16 · My Help Map

Connects to Lesson 6.

Build your personal map of support. Keep it where you can find it.

Trusted adults (school & home)	How to reach each one

School supports (counselor, etc.):

> Crisis support, anytime: the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988 (U.S.), available 24/7.

Worksheet 17 · Supporting a Friend

Connects to Lesson 6.

Plan how you'd support a struggling peer — with care and boundaries.

Signs a friend might be struggling:

What I could say to start the conversation:

How and when I'd involve a trusted adult:

Worksheet 18 · Scroll Audit

Connects to Lesson 7.

Track how time online affects your mood, sleep, and compass this week.

Statement	My answer
Average daily screen time	
How I feel after a long scroll	
An app that helps me feel Center	
An app that moves me off Center	

Worksheet 19 · Digital Footprint & Boundaries

Connects to Lesson 7.

Audit what you share and set boundaries that protect your wellbeing.

Okay to post	Keep private

One posting rule I'll keep:

One digital boundary (and how I'll hold it):

Worksheet 20 · SMART Goal & Future Self

Connects to Lesson 8.

Set a goal and connect it to who you're becoming after graduation.

My SMART goal: _____

By when: _____ First step this week: _____

How this connects to my future self / post-secondary path:

One obstacle and my plan — including who can support me:

Family Handouts

Ten standalone, take-home handouts for families of high schoolers — each on its own page. Share them so the same language travels between school and home.

Family Handout 1 · Connecting with Your High Schooler

Teenagers pull toward independence — that's healthy. Your child is learning **The Compass Check-In** at school: a way to notice where feelings point (Center, Rest, Rush, Storm, Drift) and navigate back to Center. The same language works at home.

Try this:

- Ask "Where's your compass today?" instead of an interrogation about their day.
- Talk side-by-side — driving, cooking, walking — rather than face-to-face.
- Listen more than you advise; teens stop sharing when they feel managed.
- Respect their growing autonomy while staying a steady presence.

Family Handout 2 · Stress, Anxiety, and Your Teen

High schoolers carry real stress — academics, college, work, relationships. Your child is learning to tell ordinary stress from **anxiety** that lingers or interferes, and to use evidence-informed coping and executive-function tools.

Support at home:

- Protect the basics: sleep, movement, downtime, and meals.
- Normalize stress without dismissing it; ask what would help.
- Watch for avoidance and for anxiety that doesn't lift.
- Model your own healthy coping out loud.

> If stress or anxiety persists or interferes with daily life, reach out to the school counselor or a healthcare provider.

Family Handout 3 · Healthy Relationships and Boundaries

Your child is learning to recognize healthy vs. unhealthy relationships (green flags and red flags), set and respect **boundaries**, and understand **consent** as ongoing and mutual — across friendships, dating, and family.

Talk about it:

- Define what respect, trust, and equality look like day to day.
- Support boundary-setting — including boundaries with you.
- Keep conversations open and non-judgmental so they'll come to you.
- Name red flags (control, pressure, isolation) without lecturing.

> If you're ever concerned about your child's safety in a relationship, contact the school counselor or a professional.

Family Handout 4 · Decisions, Risk, and Independence

High-stakes decisions are part of these years. Your child is learning a process — pause, check the compass, weigh consequences, decide from values — and how to resist pressure while keeping their standing.

How to help:

- Talk through decisions without taking them over.
- Agree on a no-questions code word or text for an easy exit.
- Share your own decision-making, including mistakes and lessons.
- Trust builds judgment — give increasing, age-appropriate autonomy.

Family Handout 5 · Empathy, Difference, and Belonging

Your child is practicing perspective-taking across real difference, noticing bias, and being an **upstander**. These skills build belonging — and the ability to disagree without dehumanizing.

Encourage it:

- Model curiosity about people and views different from your own.
- Discuss current issues with respect for complexity.
- Notice and name your teen's inclusive, courageous moments.
- Talk through how a situation looks from another person's side.

Family Handout 6 · Understanding Mental Health

Your child is building **mental health literacy**: understanding that mental health exists on a continuum, recognizing signs of distress, reducing stigma, and knowing that **help-seeking is a strength**. Most lifelong mental health conditions first emerge in adolescence, so this knowledge matters now.

At home:

- Talk about mental health as openly as physical health.
- Reduce stigma by your own language and attitude.
- Make sure your teen knows their trusted adults and how to reach support.
- Watch for a compass stuck in Storm, Rest, or Drift for weeks.

If you're worried about your child's wellbeing, reach out to the school counselor or a healthcare provider. In a crisis, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) is available 24/7 in the U.S.

Family Handout 7 · Your Teen and Social Media

Social media shapes mood, sleep, and self-image. Your child is learning to recognize **social comparison**, protect their **digital footprint**, pause before reacting online, and set **digital boundaries**.

Healthy digital habits:

- Co-create device norms (overnight charging, off-times) together.
- Talk about how feeds are engineered to keep us scrolling.
- Ask how their compass shifts after time online.
- Protect sleep — screens out of the bedroom overnight when possible.

> If online stress or conflict is affecting your teen’s wellbeing, talk with the school counselor.

Family Handout 8 · Growth Mindset and Resilience

Your child is learning that ability grows with effort and strategy — a **growth mindset** (Dweck, 2006) — and that setbacks are information, not verdicts. Resilience comes from strategies and support, not just willpower.

Reinforce it:

- Praise effort, strategy, and persistence — not just results or being ‘smart.’
- Treat mistakes and failures as part of learning.
- Share your own setbacks and what you learned.
- Help them build a support network, not just grit.

Family Handout 9 · Goals and the Road After High School

Your child is setting **SMART goals** and connecting today's effort to their **future self** and post-secondary path. There are many valid roads — college, career, training, service — and motivation grows when the path feels like theirs.

Support without taking over:

- Explore multiple paths without pushing one definition of success.
- Help break big goals into small, doable steps.
- Celebrate progress and effort, not just outcomes.
- Connect their goals to what they genuinely care about.

Family Handout 10 · When to Reach Out for Support

Ups and downs are normal in adolescence. But some signs mean your teen needs more support: a compass stuck in Storm, Rest, or Drift for weeks; withdrawal from friends and activities; big changes in sleep, eating, or mood; or any talk of hopelessness.

What you can do:

- Stay connected and curious, not alarmed.
- Name what you notice gently: “You’ve seemed really down lately.”
- Reach out to the school counselor — a partner, not a last resort.
- Make sure your teen knows their trusted adults at home and school.

If you’re ever worried about your child’s safety, contact a professional immediately. In a crisis, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) is available 24/7 in the U.S.

References & Notes

This curriculum is evidence-informed and aligned with the CASEL competencies and Massachusetts DESE guidance. The Compass Check-In and all lessons, activities, worksheets, and family handouts are original works of Becoming U Wellness. Formatted in APA 7th edition.

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A Note on Original Materials

All worksheets, handouts, reference tools, and routines in this curriculum are original to Becoming U Wellness and do not reproduce any third-party program or trademarked material. Established public-domain practices — growth-mindset and "yet" language (Dweck, 2006), SMART goals, I-Messages, and assertive communication — reflect common professional practice and are cited where a specific author originated the concept. teen Mental Health First Aid (Hart et al., 2016) is referenced as an example of evidence-based practice and would require its own trained instructors and licensed materials to deliver.

Educator's Disclaimer

This is a universal (Tier 1) SEL curriculum and provides educational content; it is not a substitute for clinical care. Becoming U Wellness recommends delivering the Mental Health Literacy lesson in

partnership with qualified counseling or clinical staff and in accordance with district policy and applicable law.