



### Yearlong Objectives

- Express oneself in words and art.
- Work as an ensemble.
- Understand the power and importance of uniqueness.

### Essential Questions

- What can I do when I feel uncomfortable?
- Why is it important to exercise self-compassion?
- How can I use symbols to better express my ideas?

### Lesson Objectives

- Create a collage representing important places in one's life.
- Use knowledge of maps and topography to display a metaphorical idea.
- Practice self-compassion techniques to use when confronted with uncomfortable emotions.

### National Arts Standards

- Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art. *(VA:Cr1.2.6a)*
- Design or redesign objects, places, or systems that meet the identified needs of diverse users. *(VA:CR2.3.6a)*
- Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work. *(TH:Cr2-6.b)*



### Materials needed

White cardstock, colored paper, scissors, glue sticks, brainstorming sheet *(attached)*



### Time needed

90 minutes



### Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *compassion, self-compassion, comfortable, uncomfortable*

Visual Arts: *collage, symbol, sketch*

Theatre: *ensemble, body*



### Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

**Circle:** Favorites question: *What is your favorite thing to do when you get home?*

**Optional follow-up question:** *How are you feeling right now? Use an emotion word*

**Team-building game:** One-Word Story, Level 1 (see [Team-Building Games](#))



### I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

#### Explicitly Teach

- Have students help you make a list of uncomfortable emotions.
- Say, *Every time you experience an emotion, you make a decision about what to do with that emotion. Sometimes you just sit with the emotion, but sometimes you might act in some way. For example, maybe you've seen someone get really angry and do something because of their anger. What might be an example of that?*
- Have students brainstorm a list of reactions to uncomfortable emotions. Write these reactions on the board. (Examples: throw something, cry, yell, not want to talk to anyone during lunch, etc.) Circle the answers that are appropriate actions to take while at school.
- Say, *One thing that can help when you are experiencing an uncomfortable emotion is to exercise self-compassion. Compassion is feeling sympathy and concern for another person's suffering. When you exercise self-compassion, you give yourself permission to feel whatever it is you are feeling. It can help to think about places that have felt safe to you in your life, and picture yourself in those places.*
- Give an example of a place that has felt safe to you in your own life. (Example: "When I was a child, there was a big sycamore tree in my backyard that I liked to sit under when it was hot in the summer. It was so cool and quiet there, and I felt really safe and happy there whenever I sat down.") If the ensemble in the class is strong, students might turn and talk to a partner about one place that has felt safe to them in their lives.
- Introduce art term: *collage*. *A collage is a piece of art made by combining different flat materials and attaching them to a backing. We will be making Life Collages of our safe spaces.*
- Introduce art term: *symbol*. *Artists use symbols to represent ideas. They can be shapes or even little pictures, but most art relies on symbols to convey meaning.*

#### Keep in Mind

- Go over norms for an art space. *Art space needs to be safe, respectful and calm. What needs to happen to ensure everyone feels that way?*
- Describe the new art supplies and explain how they might be difficult to use. *Paint can be messy. What expectations should we follow around paint?*
- Talk about the implications of working with permanent ink. *How can we be careful not to get this ink on our bodies or clothes? Why is that important?*



### You Do (55 minutes)

#### The project, step-by-step

- Complete the guided brainstorm sheet, attached. List a place that is special to you (for example, jungle gym), write a quick sentence about why it is special ("That's where I used to hang out with my friends in elementary school"), and then come up with a symbol to represent the place. The symbol should be simple enough that it could be cut out of paper.
- On a piece of white cardstock, sketch a road that represents your life. The road can look any way that feels right to you. Maybe it will wind back and forth if you feel like your life has had lots of twists and turns. Maybe it will be straight if you feel like your life has been pretty straightforward.
- Using the colored paper and scissors, cut out the symbols representing your safe places. If you visited the place a lot during your life, you may want to cut out several copies. (For example, if you want your collage to show that you went to the jungle gym over and over again, you might cut out six or seven jungle gym symbols.)
- Attach your symbols to the road of your life using a glue stick. You can put them on the road chronologically (an old

childhood home might go towards the beginning), or you can attach them randomly.

- Create a map key that shows what each symbol means.

**Extensions:** If you finish early, you can add other things to your map, like rivers or trees. You might also want to write sentences about why these places have been safe to you and attach those sentences to the map.

**Closure:** Have students close their eyes and picture one of their safe places. Say: “Pretend you are sitting inside your safe space. Really try to remember what it felt like to be there. See if you can let the comfortable calm feelings wash over you. See if you can think about this place next time you are feeling an uncomfortable emotion.”

**Optional Writing Prompt:** Have students write about a safe place in more detail, and explain what emotion they feel when they think about it.



## Big Picture

Next week we'll focus more closely on a specific safe place.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Safe Spaces Map  
Brainstorm Sheet

	Place name	Why was it important to you?	Sketch a symbol
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			