

(1/11/23) This resource is from the national  
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured:

>Teaching about MLK: History + SEL

>About Developing Kindness and Compassion & Promoting MH

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

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**For discussion and interchange:**

>Teaching about MLK: History + SEL

Monday, January 16, 2023 is Martin Luther King Day. As with every commemorative day, this is a great opportunity to begin projects, lessons, and discussions not only about the historical context, but also to facilitate social and emotional development with a focus on understanding of and compassion for others.

Here are some thoughts and ideas:

From: *Meaningful ways to celebrate Martin Luther King Day for kids and adults*

"My well of positive thinking has run dry and I struggle to see how our nation, so painfully divided, can ever come together. So this Martin Luther King Day, I've decided I'll focus on replenishing my faith in the good of humankind. What better day to aim to rejuvenate hope than on a day dedicated to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the visionary and activist who helped pioneer the civil rights movement?..."

This is one of the more chaotic times we've known as a nation in the days since King was among us. Perhaps the most important thing you can do this MLK day is to believe. Believe and trust that these turbulent days are a necessary phase in our collective growth as a society...."

From: *5 Creative MLK Day Activities to Celebrate Dr. King*

"...Since I teach upper elementary kids, I especially want to them see how Dr. King's words apply to how they treat each other online. Online hate, text-messaging attacks, and cyber-bullying are huge distractions to learning AND they are causing more and more division. So I include a lesson plan for MLK Day that encourages students to think of ways to show kindness through online communication and social media. Not only does it celebrate Martin's life and legacy, but it also shows students how to apply his teachings to their lives right now. ..."

From: *5 Classroom Activities for a Meaningful Martin Luther King Jr. Day*

"...As our country celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., his legacy and teachings remain particularly significant. Engaging in meaningful classroom activities can help today's students better understand our country's history and its direct links to the past. Here are a few activities to consider for any age group, as well as some inspirational quotes from Dr. King to get you and your students motivated.

**Serve Others** – *"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"*

Dr. King taught the importance of serving others. In his honor, many communities celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day with a day of service. Teachers can make Martin Luther King Jr. Day particularly meaningful for their classes by creating a service project. Students of all ages can develop their own service project for their school or community. If you need ideas or lesson plans, check out the Corporation for National and Community Service

**Connect with a Classroom** – *"We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now."* Learning about others and appreciating differences was a key message from Dr. King. Partnering with a classroom from another part of the country or world is a great way for students to learn firsthand about other cultures. If you don't know where to start, try ePals. This free online service allows teachers to connect with classrooms from all over the world.

**Mix Up Lunch** – “*In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.*” Students report that lunchrooms are one of the most cliquy and segregated places in a school. Students tend to sit with others like themselves and rarely venture out of their comfort zone. Teaching Tolerance, a website dedicated to teaching students about diversity, recently held an international event called Mix It Up at Lunch Day. ...”

From: *United We Serve*

“...MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities. During the last quarter-century, the MLK Day of Service has grown, and its impact increased as more Americans embraced the idea that citizenship involves taking an active role in improving communities. On Monday, Jan. 16, and the days surrounding, AmeriCorps invites you to: engage with your community and create constructive action; act on Dr. King’s legacy of social justice and equity; and recommit by volunteering to serve others....”

From: *Critical Reflection and Cognitive Empowerment among Youth Involved in Community Organizing*

“... youth organizing creates settings conducive to positive youth development for adolescents across three domains.

First, youth organizing promotes civic development, including a sense of sociopolitical agency and capacities such as strategic thinking regarding civic action.

Second, it bolsters psychological wellbeing by engendering hope, a sense of life purpose, positive identity development, and resilience.

Third, it contributes to academic engagement, in part through the recognition that mastery of academic skills and content can be useful in social and systemic change efforts....”

### **Tech-savvy Teens Providing Technology Support to Older Adults**

“ Every week, a group of teens from Cherry Creek High School (CO) come together to help older adults with anything technology-related at the Holly Creek Retirement Community. The volunteers are from the group Generation Technology, a nonprofit created by students a few years back. They offer a wide variety of support. Here is some of what the students shared: ‘Communication through email or FaceTime, helps people stay in touch with their relatives. A lot of people don’t live close to their family, so being able to set up video communication and bring people who might live in different states closer together is really important. What we do in Generation Tech is we bring people together that a lot of the time don’t really have much natural communication, to kind of help a fix the tech problems, but more importantly, create a different bond.’ Whether the teens are helping with printer issues or teaching about new apps on their phones, it’s also helping form strong intergenerational connections.”

For more, see the following resources from our Center:

> *Service Learning in Schools* – While there are a variety of definitions for service learning, at the core is the idea of incorporating structured, authentic, community hands-on experiences into formal education. A service learning program is intended to provide meaningful, real world experiences that promote reflection on and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the academic objectives of a course and/or major field of study. The emphasis is not only on benefiting the learner but on benefiting the community (e.g., improving services) and ultimately society (e.g., inculcating citizenship values).

> *Service-Learning and Community Service Clubs in Schools*

## About Developing Kindness and Compassion & Promoting MH

“...Although it is important to promote concern for others, encouraging concern alone may not be sufficient for fostering genuine kindness. This notion is reflected in studies that have assessed the effectiveness of school-based programs targeting prosocial behavior, suggesting that the most effective programs are those that target a wide range of compassion-related constructs in a tailored and developmentally sensitive manner. Findings from this study may contribute to informing the design of multicomponent strategies to target kindness, for example, promoting concern, tolerance, and a desire to help others may encourage youth to be more generous with their prosocial behavior.

One possible step in promoting global compassion is to increase youths’ tolerance (particularly the facet of non-judgment) by decreasing intergroup prejudice via direct positive contact with others who are perceived to be different from the self (e.g., in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, interpersonal characteristics, etc.) This is evidenced by research showing that diversity, particularly in schools, can have positive effects on children’s prosocial behavior and inclusive attitudes...”

From: [Toward Generalized Concern: The Development of Compassion and Links to Kind Orientations](#)

“...Students receive training through programs like Friday Night Live, which aim to inspire the next generation of public health leaders through advocacy and leadership development led by experts in the field of youth supports, peer education, public health and environmental prevention. The programs reflect a public health model of affecting health-related behaviors by emphasizing the broader physical, social, cultural and institutional forces that contribute to the problems within a community.

“Our team’s focus on health equity and Youth-led Participatory Action Research, an innovative approach to positive youth and community development based in social justice principles in which young people are empowered to conduct systemic research to improve communities and institutions intended to serve them,” Superintendent Estrella-Henderson said. “Engaging youth within their communities, schools, organizations and social groups helps to bring about the positive change young leaders are working toward.”

From: [Supporting student mental health](#)

“...The pandemic disrupted our traditions, practices and pursuits, how we mark milestones, what we do with our time, what’s important in routines. It replaced old with new, a kind of new that just might stick.... Nearly three years after the World Health Organization declared the deadly spread of COVID-19 a pandemic, there’s plenty of old life mixed with the new. And, yes, the latter includes a whole lot of Zooming still going on among families, colleagues and friends, near and far....

NEIGHBORLY KINDNESS – Craving company, we stood on lawns, sidewalks and cul-de-sacs to check in with each other. We brought homemade soups to senior shut-ins. We turned over armfuls of fresh-cut flowers from our gardens. We lingered for a socially distanced chat. Commitments to random acts of kindness directed at the elderly living alone continues, with neighborly schedules made for snow shoveling and pies delivered for the holidays....”

From: [Pandemic practices that live on](#)

## >Links to a few other relevant shared resources

*How to teach empathy to kids*

*What is the state of compassion education?*

*Compassion: How do you teach it?*

*A compassion framework: The role of compassion in schools in promoting well-being and supporting the social and emotional development of children and young people*

*Compassion and empathy in educational contexts*

*Project based learning and student engagement*

*2021 National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)*

*Types of social media use and digital stress in early adolescence*

*Reconceptualizing school psychology for the 21st century: the future of school psychology*

*Strengthening the school in school psychology training and practice*

## A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

- 1/11 Sustaining the Community Based Violence Intervention Ecosystem: Sources of funding for CVI strategies
- 1/12 Compassionate School Practices: Vision, Plan, and Monitor for Success
- 1/12 K-12 Cybersecurity in the Real World: Lessons Learned & How to Protect Your School
- 1/18 Selecting high quality strategies
- 1/19 Improving vocational outcomes among adolescents
- 1/22 McKinney-Vento 101: Basic requirements of the act
- 1/25 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
- 1/25 Flipping the Youth Services Paradigm
- 1/26 Building stronger connections
- 2/10 Flipping the Script for Staff Meetings - Strategies to Create a Culture of Collaboration
- 2/15/23 School violence prevention
- 2/21 Middle level students planning for high school

## To Listserv Participants

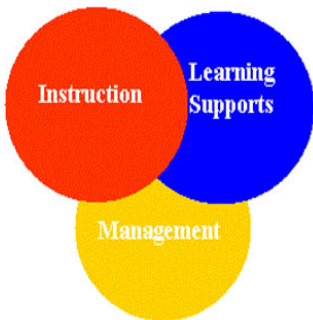
- **Please share this resource with others.** (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)
- **Let us know what's going on** to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)
- **Looking for information?** (We usually can help.)
- **Have a suggestion for improving our efforts?** (We welcome your feedback.)

***We look forward to hearing from you!***

***Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)***



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For information about the  
**National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**  
 go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;  
 transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to  
 promoting whole child development, advancing social justice,  
 and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

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**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

**For new sign-ups – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.**

**We post a broad range of issues and responses to the Net Exchange on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm> and on Facebook (access from the Center’s home page <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)**