17 November 2020 **Welcome Letter**

Welcome to the JustUnity project. Our mission is to develop and disseminate effective social-emotional learning (SEL) stratagies with teachers. The goal of this project is to create SEMH[[1]](#footnote-1) centers in classrooms by testing a variety of related strategies and activities to identify what works best for children. After identifying effective strategies for the SEMH center we will disseminate what works through research publications and for free at [justunity.org](http://www.justunity.org).

To assist in creating a SEMH center in the classroom, we have created several classroom resources. You are invited to modify the activities to best suit your learners. The activities are organized into categories related to: emotional development, social language development and character development. **Under emotional development**, you will find two versions of the “feelings helper” activity, one for younger learners and one for older learners.

Under **social language development**, you will find several activities as well as an assessment tool. Before using the language activities (i.e. courtesy scripts) we encourage you to gather baseline data by scoring the Courteous Language Tracker and then continue to assess children’s social language development weekly while you implement the related language interventions. Please share with us the completed tracker so we can gain insight into strategy effectiveness. To create a culture of compliments and positive problem solving, use the 1+1 activity with the whole class on a weekly basis.

Under **character development**, we suggest a whole class “virtue mural” activity that can be modified using many unique themes. The resulting visual display shows progress to all learners. The virtue mural can also be completed with a single child to help that child target a particular virtue for practice (e.g. patience, teamwork, kindness). Read the story [*Adam’s Virtue Sun*](https://justunity.org/?page_id=122) at justunity.org for an example. Also included are the VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues to help you facilitate conversations with children about these traits and a “daily practice” worksheet to help children develop their virtues each day.

So that we can **share what works**, we hope you will complete a short questionnare about the activities located on the research page. Tell us how you’ve improved them or even write a blog post to share your story of using the justunity.org resources. Interested teachers can **participate in our research project** where we will seek to publish what works from the website in academic journals for worldwide dissemination based on your feedback. If you have questions about any of these materials, the website or the research, please contact us.

**A digital copy of all the handouts** in one document (the ‘Starter Kit’) will be sent to you when you enroll as a research participant (free).

**Sincerely,**

Dr. Sarah Taylor-Whiteway

Dr. Michael Haslip, haslip@drexel.edu

1. Social, emotional, mental health [↑](#footnote-ref-1)