Approaches and activities for the classroom and broader school environment using the Making Space for Learning Framework

This resource invites you to consider the various strategies within each of the SPACE domains and to think of activities and approaches you currently use, and what you might like to use in the future, to support a trauma informed approach in your school.

Some approaches may be about the language you use, how you convey your words, physical resources that could help, utilising helpful structures, lesson content or creating opportunities. Activities might include whole class activities or activities that can be used with an individual student. The approaches and activities you use might also be different depending on the age of your students. The examples in this resource are particularly helpful with secondary students (although many can also be used with younger students).
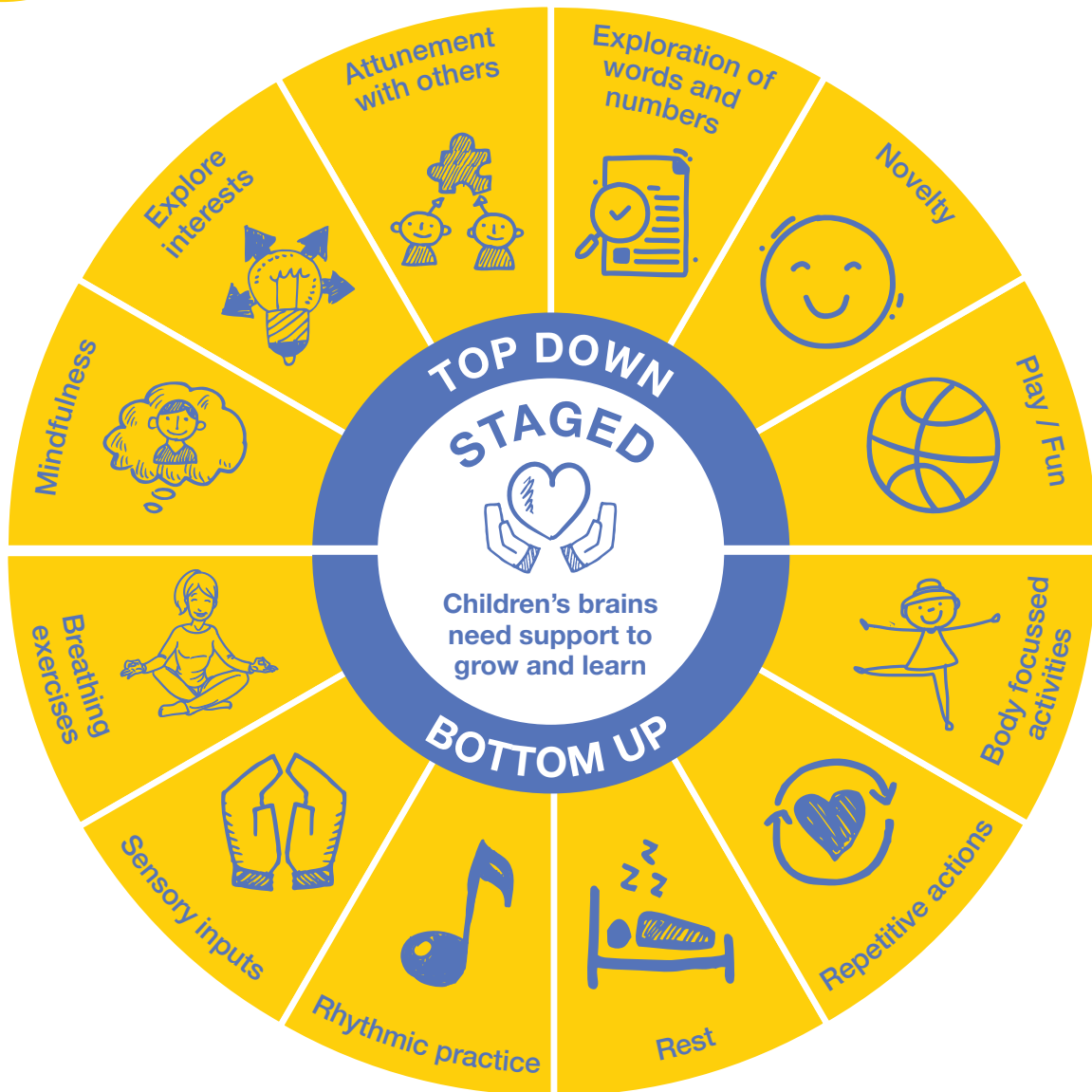
This activity is an opportunity to identify sustainable approaches and activities that will work for you in your school. Creating opportunities for all staff to share and discuss ideas for approaches and activities is a great way to support trauma informed practice. This encourages the sharing of experiences and practice wisdom and helps to embed systems and processes to support the implementation of trauma informed approaches within the whole school environment.

This resource supports you to consider each of the strategies within the SPACE domains and identify approaches and activities you currently use and approaches and activities you would like to try. It is a great way to build up a list of ideas that might work in your classroom and school.

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STAGED

TOP DOWN

STAGED

Children's brains need support to grow and learn

BOTTOM UP

Wheel segments:
- Attunement with others
- Exploration of words and numbers
- Novelty
- Play / Fun
- Body focussed activities
- Repetitive actions
- Rest
- Rhythmic practice
- Sensory inputs
- Breathing exercises
- Mindfulness
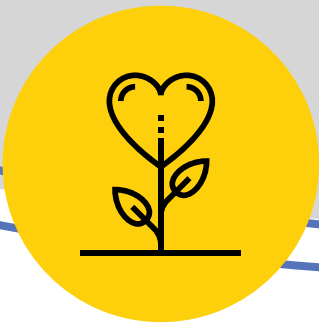- Explore interests

Some examples under the STAGED Domain:

Breathing Exercises: Use breathing exercise such as 5 Finger Breathing (2 mins) at beginning and end of each lesson.

Rest: Use https://www.dreamysleep.com.au/ and other apps for end of week lessons for 10 to 20 minute rest session as time permits. Or allow 2 minutes at end of each session for students to rest their head on the desk or just lower their head and sit quietly and relaxed before transitioning to another space – maybe invite them to listen for sounds outside the classroom, or the colours or shapes that may appear on the inside of their eyelids or invite to see whether they can lower their heart rate at all.

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STAGED

STAGED	Approaches or activities I/we currently use:	Approaches or activities I/we would like to try:
TOP DOWN		
Mindfulness		
Explore interests		
Attunement with others		
Exploration of words and numbers		
Novelty		
Fun/Play		

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STAGED

STAGED	Approaches or activities I/we currently use:	Approaches or activities I/we would like to try:
BOTTOM UP		
Breathing exercises		
Sensory inputs		
Rhythmic practice		
Rest		
Repetitive actions		
Body focussed activities		

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PREDICATABLE

PREDICTABLE

Children need to know what they can count on

Predictable environments

Reliable relationships

Transparency

Expectations

Planned transitions

Maps/plans/timetables

Routines

Some examples under the PREDICTABLE Domain:

Planned transitions: Use laminated images representing structure of current lesson or when moving from one activity to another. Blue Tac to wall and briefly go over the types of activities and transitions. Have laminated images for Individual Work, Pair Work, Small Group Work, Reflective Activity, Using Materials, Putting Materials Away etc.

Predictable environments: Keep seating in the same configuration, keep materials / resources in the same place and flag up where they are moved to if necessary. Go through a list of what is needed for the lesson – get students to flag up if they don't have something and have back up.
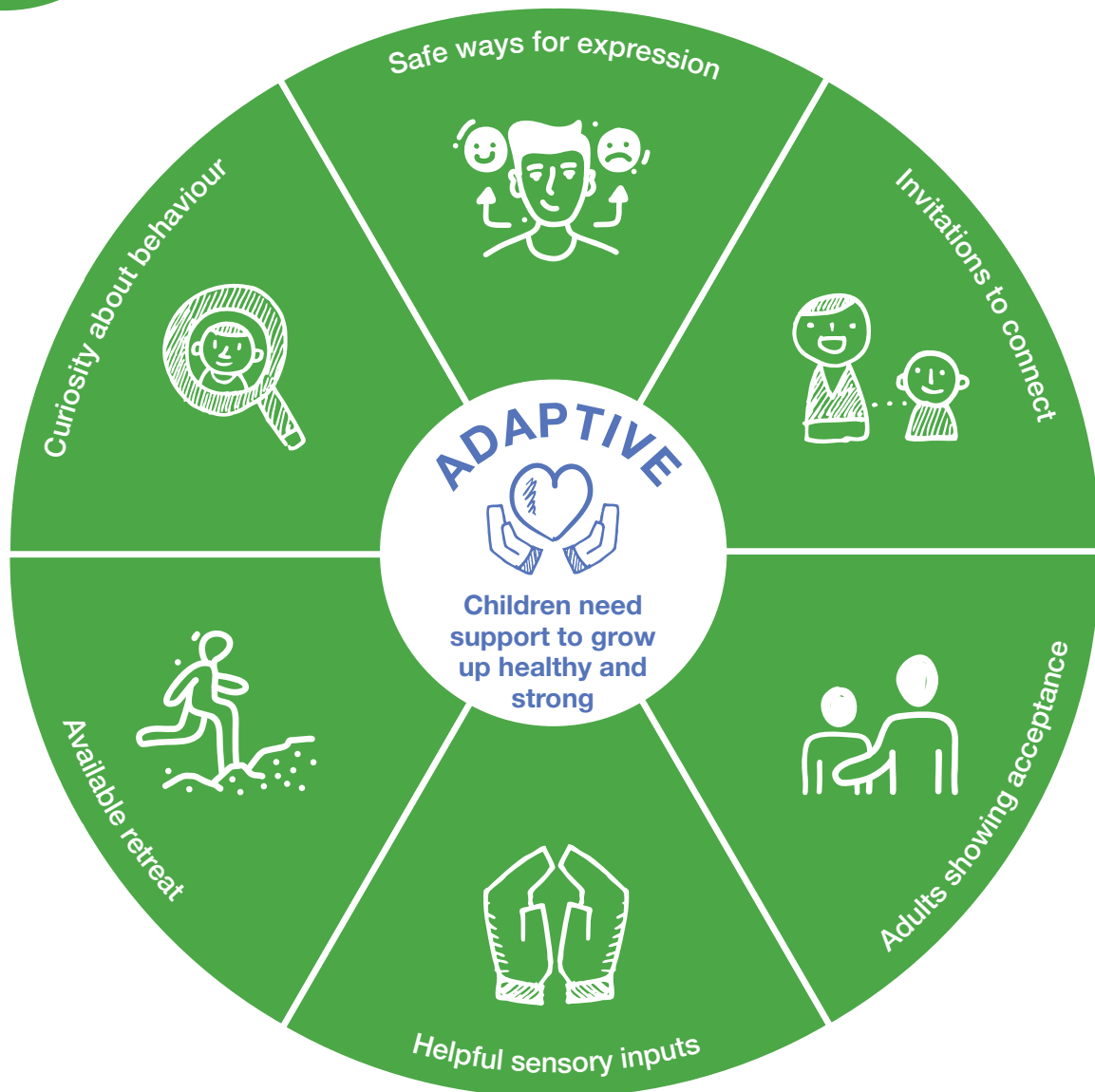
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PREDICATABLE

PREDICATABLE	Approaches or activities I/we currently use:	Approaches or activities I/we would like to try:
Routines		
Predictable environments		
Reliable relationships		
Transparency		
Expectations		
Planned transitions		
Maps/ Plans/ Timetables		

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ADAPTIVE

ADAPTIVE

Children need support to grow up healthy and strong

- Safe ways for expression
- Invitations to connect
- Adults showing acceptance
- Helpful sensory inputs
- Available retreat
- Curiosity about behaviour

Some examples under the ADAPTIVE Domain:

Adults showing acceptance: Use PACE model (Dan Hughes), use acknowledgments and acceptance statements such as I know this doesn't seem important to you right now because there are probably other things going on for you in the background and it's hard to prioritise work. It can be a real challenge. Take a couple of minutes and I'll check in on you then.
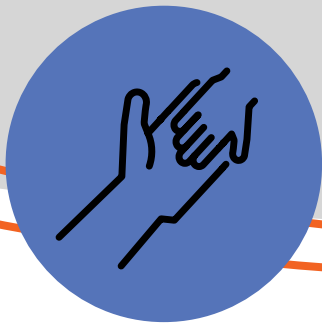
Helpful sensory inputs: Use Safe Sensory Profile – explain purpose of activity and that they should only share what they are comfortable with. Invite students to draw around hand and put one of the main five senses in each finger. Invite students to think about what sensory experiences they seek out that helps them feel calm for each sensory modality. Spend time with them to think of ways they could tap into these calming sensory experiences if needed in the classroom and around the school.
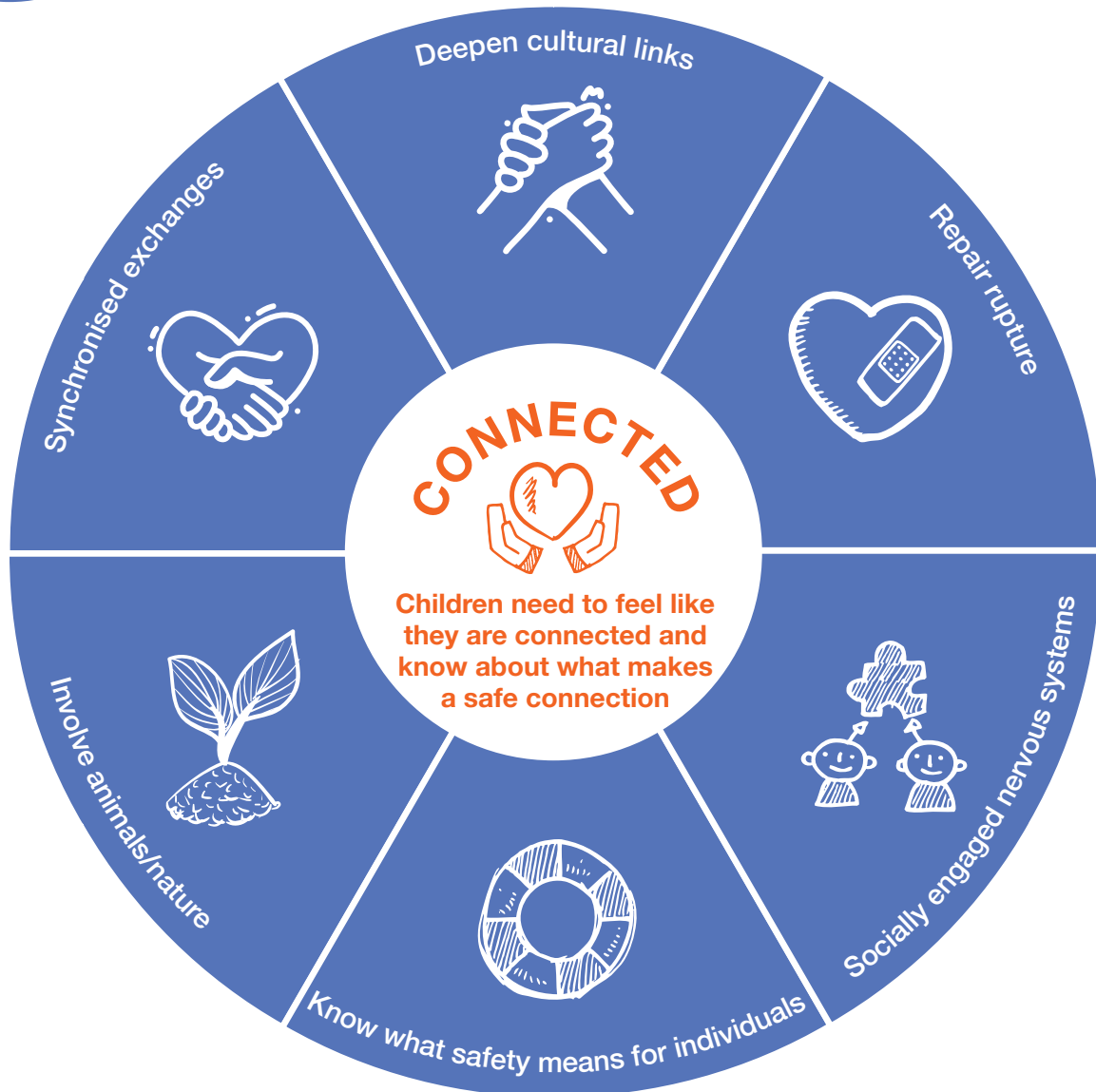
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ADAPTIVE

ADAPTIVE	Approaches or activities I/we currently use:	Approaches or activities I/we would like to try:
Curiosity about behaviour		
Safe ways for expression		
Invitations to connect		
Adults showing acceptance		
Helpful sensory inputs		
Available retreat		

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CONNECTED

Deepen cultural links

Synchronised exchanges

Repair rupture

CONNECTED

Children need to feel like they are connected and know about what makes a safe connection

Involve animals/nature

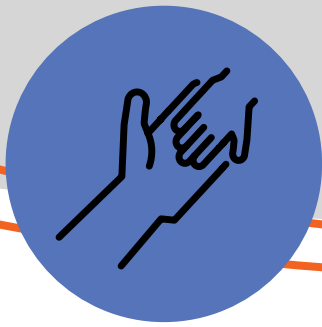Socially engaged nervous systems

Know what safety means for individuals

Some examples under the CONNECTED Domain:

Deepen cultural links: regularly use stories, studies, images, and examples from cultures that represent the students.

Take time to explore the culture of the students you interact with to build understanding/ awareness, ask curious gentle questions (being mindful not to assume that the student will know the answer).

Synchronised exchanges: Use 4321; the structured question and response check-in tool used at the beginning of a class or end of day activity: 4 things that happened to me today (activities, happenings, events), 3 feelings felt (& context), 2 things I learnt or want to learn more about, 1 value or gratitude
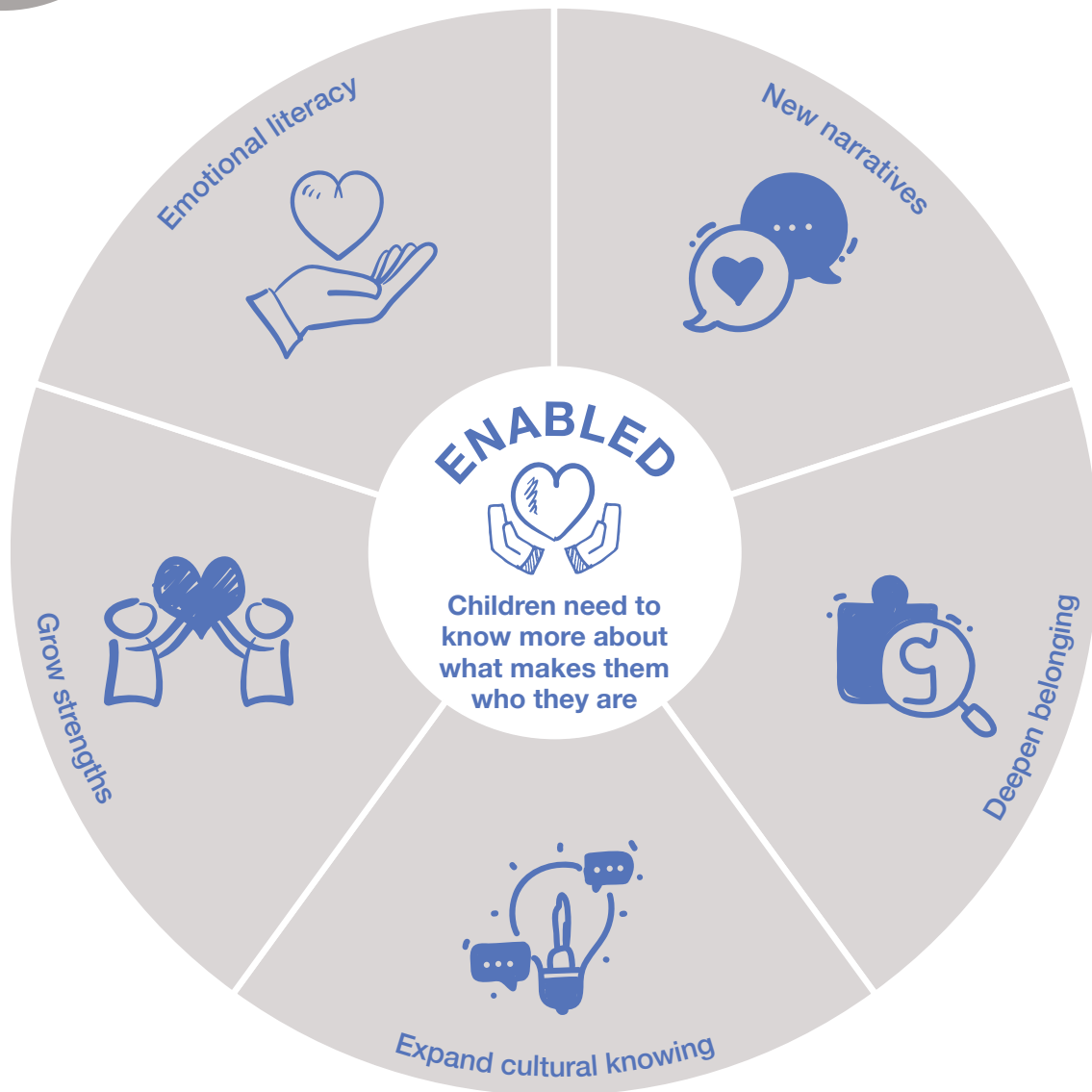
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CONNECTED

CONNECTED	Approaches or activities I/we currently use:	Approaches or activities I/we would like to try:
Synchronised exchanges		
Deepen cultural links		
Repair rupture		
Socially engaged nervous system		
Know what safety means for individuals		
Involve animals and nature		

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ENABLED

ENABLED

Children need to know more about what makes them who they are

- Emotional literacy
- New narratives
- Deepen belonging
- Expand cultural knowing
- Grow strengths

Some examples under the ENABLED Domain:

Emotional literacy: On a regular basis, use Emotions Cards and invite each student to give one word of how they are feeling using one of the emotions cards (these cards do not use the words angry or happy so that students are encouraged to dig deeper about how they are feeling). Be sure to make a note of those students reporting feelings that may need follow up and do so when appropriate.

Deepen belonging: use phrases such as the following on a regular basis to reflect genuine experience of the student; I'm really interested in your opinion, you bring _____ to this class/ work/ event, this class/ event/ discussion wouldn't be the same without your input, I need another perspective, could you tell me what you think, I really enjoy your _____ in this class/ group / session, we missed you yesterday when you weren't here. With student permission have their work displayed. Ensure each student has experiences of taking on clear roles that they are comfortable with in class/ event/ task.

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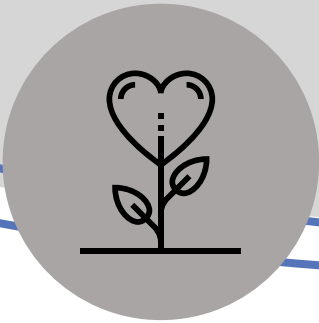
ENABLED

ENABLED	Approaches or activities I/we currently use:	Approaches or activities I/we would like to try:
Emotional literacy		
New narratives		
Deepen belonging		
Expand cultural knowing		
Grow strengths		