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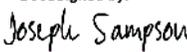
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Using SEL Literature Circles to Increase Positive Behaviors
in Elementary School Males

by

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Thesis Abstract

The increasing number of elementary school males with multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or complex traumas has increased the need for more social emotional learning and intervention within the classroom environment. As a result, many elementary school students have an increase in Office Discipline Referrals for unexpected behaviors. This is especially prevalent in aggressive behaviors in elementary school males. Interventions including Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), and trauma-informed positive education (TIPE) and bibliotherapy have proven to be effective in helping students self-regulate within a structured environment. This research article seeks to answer if introducing a bibliotherapy or Social Emotional Learning (SEL) literature circle provides the benefits of the aforementioned practices, to increase positive behaviors and thus reduce aggressive behaviors that result in office discipline referrals. The results of the research study show that SEL literature can be used in a literature circle format to help students understand the behaviors that lead to aggressive actions, model practices that are effective for reducing these behaviors and provide opportunities for students to practice these positive strategies in a safe classroom environment.

Keywords: aggressive behavior in males, bibliotherapy, elementary school males, literature circles, student discipline referrals, social emotional learning,

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Chapter One: Defining the Problem

Approximately half of children attending public schools have experience some form of trauma (Terrasi & de Galarce, 2017). According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2014) approximately 40% of students are affected with some form of trauma. Some have complex traumas. The trauma ultimately becomes part of the triangulation of disruptive behavior that leads to referrals. In recent years, schools have sought ways to reduce the number of disruptions through curriculum or systems that support Social Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL is defined as the process for individuals to effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills to understand and manage emotions (DePaoli, Atwell, & Bridgeland, 2017). SEL has been favorable for most school leaders, however, many struggle with the implementation, tracking and complete training for teachers and school staff. Although 83 percent of principals surveyed in a study believed SEL improves school climate, promotes good citizenship and developing teacher-student relations, very few believed SEL can be a major contributor to increase academic performance (DePaoli et al., 2017). In addition, lack of a full effective SEL implementation in schools has resulted in an increase in Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) and does not necessarily address the needs of students with trauma – especially those prone to fight or flight due to complex traumas in classrooms, referred to as “high-flyers”. “To compound the problem, teachers who are unaware of the dynamics of complex trauma can easily mistake its manifestations as willful disobedience, defiance, or inattention, leading them to respond to it as though it were mere “misbehavior.” When students struggle to focus on tasks or complete assignments, teachers might interpret it as laziness or lack of motivation” (Terrasi & de Galarce, 2017).

The conflict and complex traumatic events these students experience outside of school returns with them when they enter the class and any triggers create disruption to the classroom and often separating themselves from their peers. These peers may qualify for counseling but in schools with limited resources, or students not yet diagnosed or recognized as a student with trauma, the end result for these students is suspension, detention and lack of motivation in schools. For specific demographics, such as African-American and Hispanic students, the suspension rate is already drastic compared to other groups, “a 2009-2010 survey of 72,000 schools (kindergarten through high school) shows that while Black students made up only 18 percent of those enrolled in the schools sampled, they accounted for 35 percent of those suspended once, 46 percent of those suspended more than once and 39 percent of all expulsions. Over all, Black students were three and a half times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their White peers (Lewin, 2012)” (Kirwan Institute: Racial Disproportionality in School Discipline: Implicit Bias is Heavily Implicated,” 2014). “Schools lack effective strategies for incorporating at-risk students as productive members of the broader educational community. Student misbehavior regularly results in removal from the educational setting, typically through the use of in- or out-of-school suspensions, even though research does not demonstrate that any kind of suspension serves as deterrence from future misbehavior; conversely, many researchers have shown connections between suspensions and negative outcomes such as continued academic failure, negative school attitudes, and higher dropout rates” (Schreur, 2015).

Schools have recently created trauma-informed environments to support these students, provide tools and teach abilities to cope and build resilience within the safety of the classroom.

In New York, a school-based art therapy program combined the talents of administrators, art therapists, teachers and students to provide a means to teach conflict resolution through the arts (Gibbons, K., 2016) and forms of bibliotherapy in the classroom facilitated by the teacher in small groups. These therapeutic but academic approaches provides resource lacking schools to provide the support these students need within the confines of a safe environment – the classroom. According to Schreur, “These students typically lack three key aspects that would enable them to be successful within the traditional classroom setting: grade-level literacy, critical thinking skills, and the emotional stability to deal with stressful situations such as the classroom.”(Schreur, 2015). It is suggested that when students with trauma are placed in a caring and positive environment; work best in one on one or small groups and while challenged, engaged with curriculum that they can identify with and relate in their lives, ultimately produce positive results. Providing an academic, social-emotional, trauma-informed approach that teachers could use in the classroom would reduce the behaviors that result in office discipline referrals. Students are able to relate to the character of a book or the themes that reveal their own revelations about themselves through the character. “It is most effective when conducted as an interactive process in which guided discussions are used to achieve therapeutic goals.” (Cook, Earles-Vollrath & Ganz, 2006).

Bibliotherapy or literature for social emotional learning, provides the academic and emotional structures to meet these needs for students with trauma. Clinical bibliotherapy – most recognized in cognitive behavioral therapy differs from the developmental bibliotherapy in the academic setting. The latter can be used “to address challenging behavior or to facilitate solutions to specific situations. Students, especially those with disabilities, often have difficulty understanding and verbalizing their thoughts, feelings and behavioral responses to situations”

(Cook, et. al, 2006). Students in bibliotherapy, learn through the characters and the events how to respond, react and safely discuss their feelings through the story and learn how to cope in the process.

In this discussion, the question sought for this research is: if bibliotherapy – referred to for the intents and purposes of this research – as social emotional learning literary circles (or SEL Lit Circles) can increase positive behaviors and thus reduce classroom referrals in elementary school boys affected by trauma? In this research there are several themes to consider and review: 1) bibliotherapy and social emotional learning; 2) discipline referrals; and 3) trauma-informed approaches in schools.

Discovering how an added process that also enhances a child’s learning ability as well as build resilience and provide security for a child affected could reduce the amounts of negative classroom behavior in schools and create a positive learning environment to support developmental growth.

Case Study: Pacific View Elementary

Pacific View Elementary has a total of 498 students with a population that is 92% socio-economically disadvantaged and 74% English learners. The school is 94% Latino, 2% White and 2% African-American. The data collected included major and minor student referrals that are entered into the school platform, Illuminate. Major and Minor referrals are categorized by severity and identified by behaviors including excessive disturbance, physical violence, and truancy. For purposes of this data collection, the twenty categories for major and minor referrals were separated into five categories of behavior: 1) physical violence/contact, 2) verbal/verbal assault, 3) disrespectful behavior, 4) school violations (including truancy) and 5) work avoidance. By the end

of October, 4th grade had the highest number of referrals, followed by 2nd grade students. This trend continued four months later in the February referral report with increases in all grade levels. This has drawn the concern of the principal who has employed numerous PBIS strategies to assist with grade level teachers, in addition to counselors and the school psychologists who work with many of the students whom are repeated referrals throughout the year. This case study will examine only two months of the data and the related behaviors that contribute to the referrals.

Data Analysis

The data in Figure 1 show that in the month of October, fourth grade received the greatest amount of referrals by 63%. Second grade had the second largest amount of referrals at 15% followed by third and fifth grades at 10%. After two months of school, kindergarten and first grade had 2% or less.

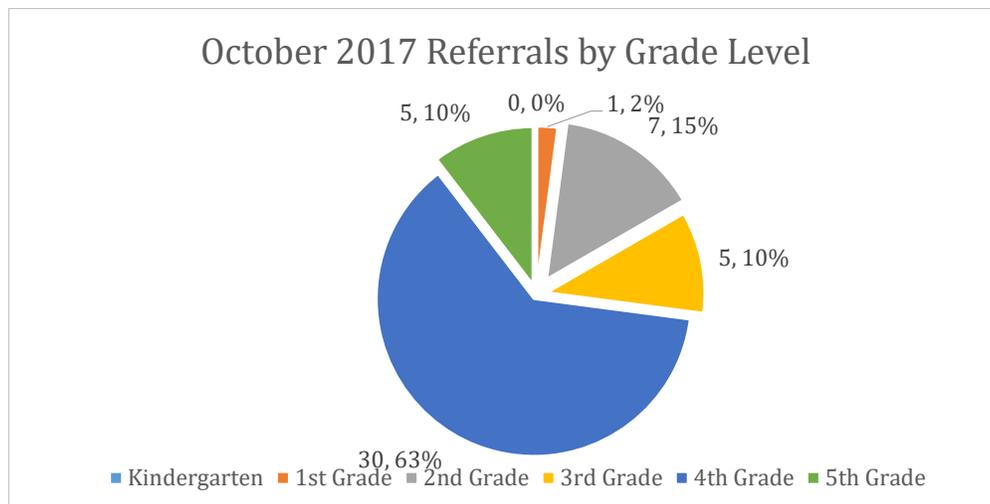


Figure 1. October 2017 Referrals by Grade Level.

In Figure 2., the graph for February 2018 shows that all grade levels except fourth have increased in student referrals. Even though fourth grade’s referral showed a reduction, dropping to 43% in number, the grade level remained the highest in referrals, followed again by second grade

at 15%. It should be noted that several students were switched from one fourth grade class to a different one, and this grade level received more assistance from the district PBIS team to employ Tier 2 strategies. Despite the additional changes, repeat behaviors continued in the new class based on referrals. Of the students with multiple referrals, 64% of the student initiators had suffered trauma or adverse childhood experience (ACE) (Figure 3).

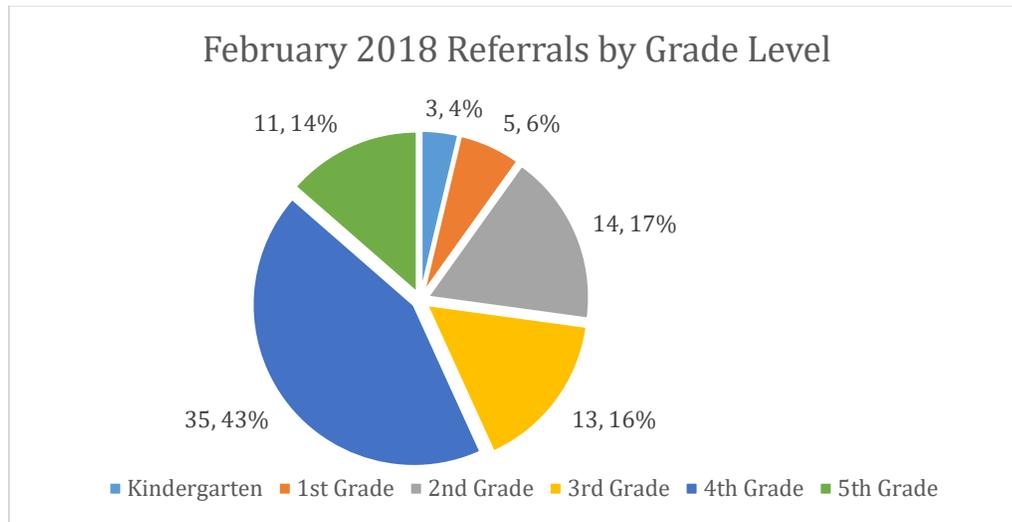


Figure 2. Pacific View Elementary 2018 data for major and minor Referrals by grade level.

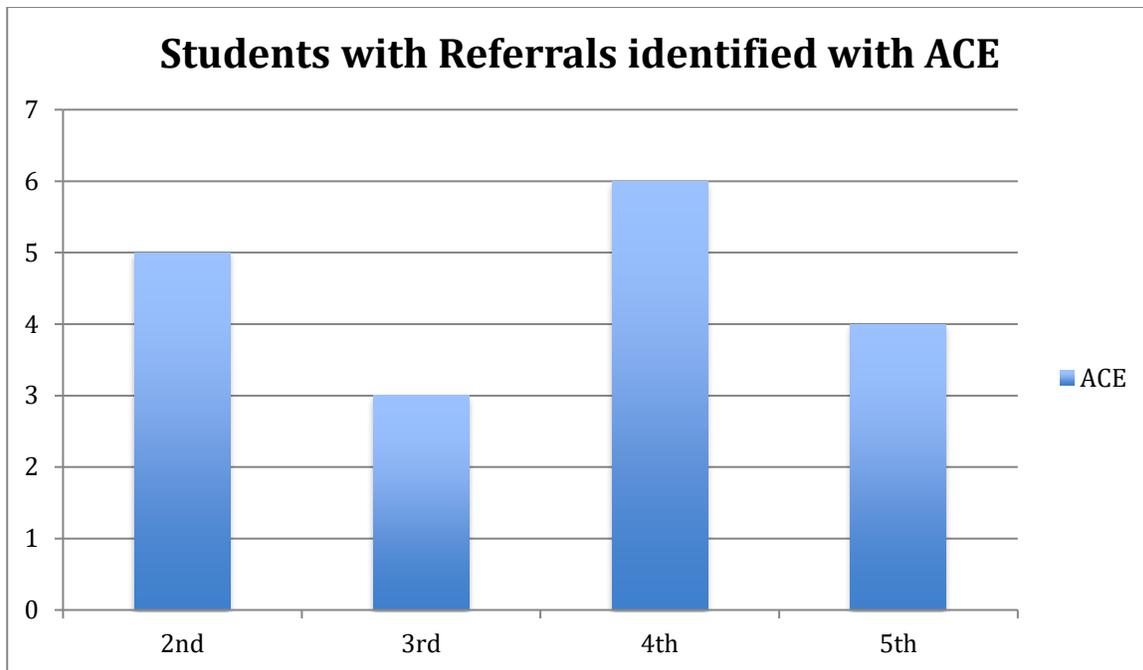


Figure 3. Number of students with multiple referrals identified with adverse childhood experiences.

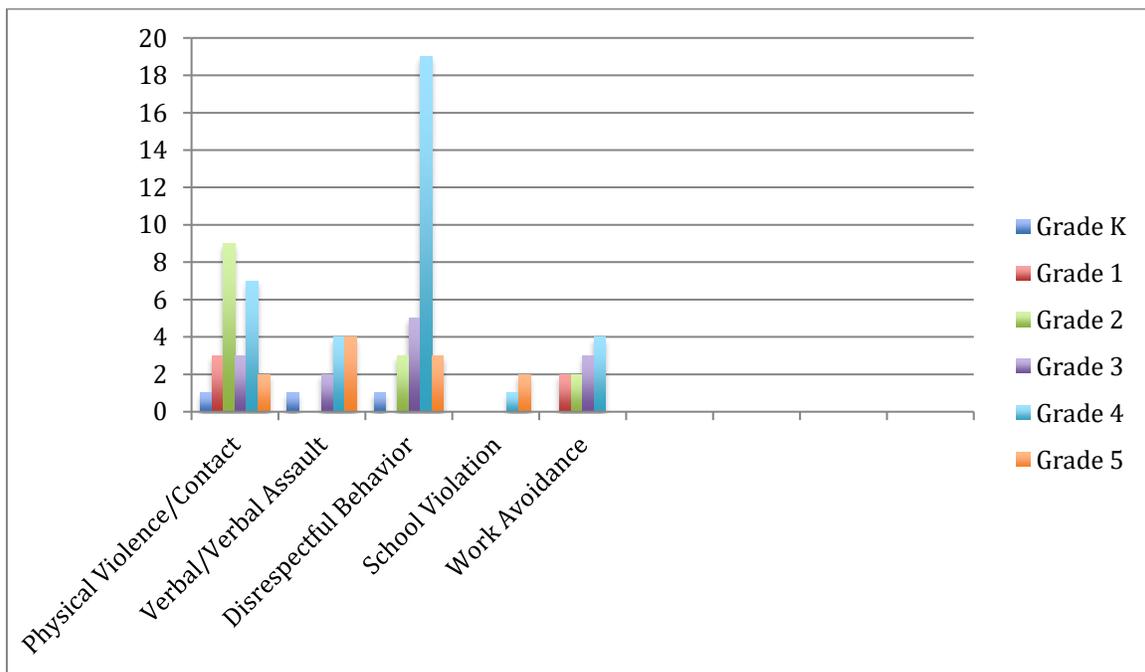


Figure 4. Identified categories of student referral behaviors at Pacific View Elementary.

When analyzing Figure 4, the data shows a correlation between students with ACE and referrals for physical violence or physical contact and disrespectful behavior, although second grade has a lower percentage of disrespectful behavior at that time compared to fourth grade, it can be hypothesized that as students become older, the need to challenge authority may also increase. PBIS strategies implemented for Tier 1 and Tier 2 have identified high fliers in the school, students have been taught self-regulatory methods such as Zones of Regulation, and a few students have access to counseling however, there are still gaps of care due to lack of resources that other students have not received at the level needed.

The data for behavioral referrals clearly indicates there is a need for additional methods to address student behavior – especially from students who've suffered traumatic experiences. Although PBIS has produced some positive effect on reduction in the fourth grade, it has not decreased the amount of violence and disrespectful behaviors that is exhibited in second and fourth grades. Providing additional methods that can be therapeutic in an educational setting could address both behavior and trauma.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Bibliotherapy or the use of using cognitive behavior therapy or literary text as a therapeutic tool for addressing behaviors, events, crisis and trauma has expanded its use from the clinical domain to the educational setting (“Racial Disproportionality in School Discipline: Implicit Bias is Heavily Implicated,” n.d.). The prevalence for using bibliotherapy in the classrooms is largely due to an increasing number of trauma-affected students resulting in a move towards schools using a trauma-informed approach to address these students’ needs and provide a safe, positive and secure environment to optimize their ability to learn (Brunzell, Stokes, & Waters, 2016a, p. 10). When effective emotional/behavioral supports are absent in the classroom, a child afflicted with trauma may resort to angry or disruptive outbursts, disengagement in class participation and disruption to instruction. Although numerous articles explain the use and benefits of bibliotherapy in the classroom setting, it is through the trauma-informed approach in schools that would prove the most effective for students with trauma. Thus the purpose of this research is to examine how the use of bibliotherapy within the classroom setting can reduce disruptive behaviors from trauma-afflicted boys. The literature reviewed focuses on themes of building resilience, coping skills and student regulatory methods to address behaviors that affect the students’ learning.

School discipline referrals (SDRs) are often used to identify and record unexpected or unwanted student behavior, NIH-PA (Rusby, Taylor, & Foster, 2007) focused on how SDRs could be helpful in early intervention for disruptive behavior problems. In this descriptive study, the authors examined the validity of SDRs in the early grade levels with focus on first grade. Using recruited families of first grades, “66% agreed to participate in the study. Nearly half were boys (46%) and 18% were of Hispanic ethnicity. Most of the non-Hispanic students were Caucasian, 2% were American Indian, 1% were Asian, .5% were African-American, and 8%

were of other, mixed, or unreported race. The median range of family incomes for this universal sample was between \$30,000 and \$34,069, and 22% of the families had an income below \$20,000” (Rusby et al., 2007). The methodology involved end of the year questionnaires for teachers and parents. The teachers completed the Child and Adolescent Disruptive Behavior Inventory (CADBI version 2.3; Burns, Taylor, & Rusby, 2001) with a reliability of .96 and the parents completed the CADBI 2.3 questionnaire, with a reliability rating of .94. They also collected archival records of SDRs for that year of first graders. Based on the collection of SDRs and questionnaires, it revealed first grade boys had more SDRs than girls and boys who were listed as at risk in kindergarten received more SDRs than any other group. “The most prevalent behaviors that received discipline referrals for first grade students, representing 85% of the SDRs, were physical aggression, disruption or rule breaking in common school areas and in the classroom, defiance or subordination, and potentially dangerous behavior” (Rusby et al., 2007). Unlike previous studies, students from socio-economic disadvantaged families (SES) or qualified free/reduced lunch schools, had a lower percentage of SDRs. One limitation that could affect this result is not having knowledge how the school’s money is spent in resources to address behaviors (e.g. behavior support, staffing, equipment). Another limitation is the study does not indicate if any intervention program may be in place or if there is an automated system to record SDRs. These factors may contribute to the results and would need to be reviewed as well. It also does not examine how many children participants had adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or if there are any positive behavior reinforcements (such as PBIS) provided at the sites.

Research on how positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) strategies and training for reducing behaviors of disruptive middle school students on buses was conducted by Collins and Ryan (Collins & Ryan, 2016) to determine if PBIS can be as effective with buses in

transit as in the classroom. In this quantitative study, the participants are students, teachers and bus drivers from a Title I school of approximately 500 students, including “an equal distribution of males and females—35% Caucasian, 34% African American, 30% Hispanic, and 1% of students from other ethnicities. The school also employed 39 teachers and seven bus drivers” (Collins & Ryan, 2016). Using an A-B-A-B reversal design, drivers continued traditional practices of discipline until the intervention phase for all participants to receive training and/or given expectations of the new discipline system to eventually implement the PBIS system on the bus routes. At the end of the 8-week period, drivers and administrators completed a questionnaire regarding the experience and their observations. The overall result was a drastic reduction in referrals and behaviors on the bus and in subsequent weeks, continued reductions. The survey also indicated positive feedback from bus drivers and administrators in the implementation of PBIS. However, the limitations of this study is only one school, from the Southeastern U.S. was selected without any other to compare regionally or other aspects. In addition, there was no indication if any other factors might contribute to the behaviors including identifying participants with trauma. Despite the positive results of these studies on discipline, neither focuses on the needs of students with trauma or complex traumas and behavior.

Children with trauma or complex trauma - the cumulative effect of traumatic experiences that are repeated or prolonged over time (Terrasi & de Galarce, 2017) are often affected emotionally and developmentally that impacts interpersonal skills, the ability to self-regulate, and lacking in cognitive abilities compared to their peers. “For school-aged children, the detrimental effects of stress are especially formidable, impeding their physical, social, emotional, and academic development. They may be unable to trust their environment and the people in it, and they often have difficulty forming relationships, interpreting verbal and nonverbal cues, and understanding

other people's perspectives. When children perceive their environment as a dangerous place, they can become hypervigilant, experiencing everyone and everything as a potential threat to their safety" (Terrasi & de Galarce, 2017)

Mendelson conducted a study to determine if a program in Baltimore, MD would improve social, emotional and academic abilities for students suffering from depression (Mendelson, Tandon, O'Brennan, Leaf, & Ialongo, 2015). Using 7th and 8th grade participants from Baltimore City Public Schools, students were randomly placed in controlled and intervention groups. Students in the latter group were assigned to a 6-week RAP Club program. Teacher observed outcomes identified that the students' behaviors have made rapid gains while the students' responses revealed that although further examination revealed that their depression had improved, there was no higher gains with an increase of intensity in the program. This too, like Collins, had a small sample of participants and students were voluntary and not required to reveal if any depression is trauma-based.

Brunzell's study shifts from focus on programs to the role of positive education on students with complex traumas (Brunzell, Stokes, & Waters, 2016b). Listing five assumptions:

- (1) An education approach to trauma-informed learning should include high learning expectations and aspirations that are developmentally informed; (2) trauma-informed teaching should provide students with access and opportunities that assist them to increase positive psychological resources (Keyes 2002; ¹Seligman et al. 2005); (3) the classroom is sometimes the most stable and consistent location in a trauma-affected student's life and can be used as therapeutic milieu to meet complex intervention needs (Perry 2006); (4) well-being should and can be taught in all school

settings (Seligman et al. 2009); (5) in order to successfully access many of these cognitive-based positive psychology interventions (e.g., character development, resilient self-talk, hope, and goal setting), students must be developmentally ready in a number of other affective, physiological, and interpersonal competencies that have been compromised by the effects of trauma (Schoore 2012); and (6) the paradigm of positive education is not simply another addition to a student's healing and growth but may reinforce a student's ability to develop regulatory capacities and strong attached relationships due to the proposed synergistic interactions of upward spirals of well-being that enable even more effective classroom learning (p. 56).

Using the Trauma-informed positive education (TIPE) model, Brunzell focuses on three domains: 1) repairing regulatory abilities; 2) repairing disrupted attachment; and 3) increasing psychological resources (Brunzell et al., 2016b). The focus in the classroom relies heavily on a trained teacher's consistent involvement in helping the student identify strengths that they will practice throughout the day, participate in co-regulatory exercises to repair regulatory abilities. During academic activities, such as literacy class with reader's workshop, the student is provided text that allows them to social emotional building models by identifying emotions, self-talk, character strengths, hope and resilience (2016). Although the TIPE model provides a whole-child trauma-informed experience, the limitations of this model explained only with one student affected by trauma and does not address how to provide for multiple students with complex traumas. Also, during the literacy instruction described, the reader's workshop requires the student to read alone and does not provide opportunities for students to engage in discussing these qualities in a small group of students to provide greater understanding and benefit of using literature for students with trauma-influenced behaviors.

Brunzell, Stokes and Waters' (2016) study on trauma-informed flexible learning hypothesized that within flexible classrooms for trauma-affected students, the trauma-affected student's regulatory abilities should be the first aim in a Trauma Informed Positive Environment (TIPE) (Collins & Ryan, n.d.). Using a qualitative inquiry action research, Brunzell et al. provided teachers with methods for teaching regulatory abilities including rhythm, self-regulation, mindfulness and de-escalation to reduce negative behaviors in students. Teachers were trained in each regulatory ability and longitudinal interviews were conducted during the thirteen-week study. Data from an appreciative inquiry action research identified how teachers' were able to create, implement and reflect on the classroom interventions. The data resulted in an increase in student regulatory abilities after methods were applied in the classroom setting.

Similarly, one of the regulatory abilities in TIPE, mindfulness, was also applied in Ilbay's (2016) qualitative and quantitative study of mindfulness in a biblio counseling group, using the story of *The Little Prince*. Rather than use teacher input to increase participants' regulatory abilities, Ilbay utilized the text of *The Little Prince* to explore the use of mindfulness. Ilbay hypothesized of all the subgroups tested, the Biblio Group Counseling supported with the text would yield the greatest increase of all sub groups tested (İlbay, 2016). This approach supports Brunzell's suggestion that the regulatory needs must be addressed initially and with the reading of *The Little Prince*, participants could use the book as a focus on discussing its transformative effects. Unlike Brunzell's study that had secondary student participants, Ilbay's participants were young adults who were able to cognitively connect to the literature and themes within the group setting.

Magaji like Ilbay used bibliotherapy as an applied method to determine if it could be used as a problem-solving skill of counselors and teachers for character and skills development in secondary

students afflicted with emotional disturbances (Magaji, 2016). Using a quantitative research Likert-scale, participants answered a series of questions after receiving treatment from counselors, participants found the process positive and were able to discuss their problems using the problem-solving skills from the text. In addition, the skills in counselors they thought were effective in addition to the bibliotherapy was counselors who listened well and created an unbiased, non-judgmental space for them to talk. The study concluded that bibliotherapy can be a problem-solving tool for counselors and teachers who work with emotionally disturbed students. The implications of this study like the previous indicate that building regulatory skills with methods such as bibliotherapy can be utilized in classroom settings and must be addressed before focus on any academic needs to ensure student success.

Despite the successful approaches in using literature to address regulatory abilities within a trauma-informed environment, Theron's (Theron, Cockcroft, & Wood, 2017) quantitative study on culturally responsive literature to support resilience in orphaned and vulnerable children in South Africa identified how using cultural related folktales provided the experimental group the greatest improvement indicating that lay people with proper training can increase resilience in students suffering from trauma. After compiling stories, primarily sourced from African elders and older relatives' of South African folktales within the community. The common theme in all of these stories was about African children or animals who overcame difficulties. Using a quantitative measure through a Likert type scale (Child and Youth Resilience Measure); and a qualitative measure with the Draw-and-Talk/-Write methodology that has children participants create freehand drawings and be able to explain the meaning of the drawing. The overall results revealed significant differences between the experimental and control groups. Thus, the study concluded there was self-efficacy value in selecting and reading stories to African orphan and vulnerable

children (OVC). It was also concluded that when meaningfully used, lay people can use bibliotherapy in a culturally responsive manner that can cultivate resilience (Theron et al., 2017).

Bibliotherapy or social emotional themed literature had been practiced in non-clinical settings. Religious teachers and advisers have used sacred text to guide spiritual and emotional health of communities (Sullivan & Strang, 2002). Sullivan and Strang recognized how reading social emotional literature or bibliotherapy with children allows students to express their emotions without creating the aggressive classroom behavior and ultimately peer rejections. In classroom delivery of effective bibliotherapy, includes 1) identification, 2) catharsis and 3) insight (Sullivan & Strang, 2002). Used in the classroom, bibliotherapy or social emotional learning through literature could provide active dialogue within the academic curriculum that can increase reading skills, teach strategies and provide activities through games and activities to apply lessons learned.

The qualitative bibliotherapy study unlike Brunzell's study focuses singularly on the use of literature in the classroom to promote social and emotional skills for third graders. In Elley's six-week study's purpose is to "determine if using children's literature books to help students think about, understand, and work through social and emotional issues helped third grade students' develop more social and emotional skills" (Elley, 2014). The participants, a classroom of 17 students, six boys and 11 girls, two identified as African American, two identified as White and the other students identified as Hispanic/Latino that attend a Title I school. The selection of literature used in this study, included subject matter that pertained to the social emotional needs of the students, including poverty and personal space. These readings took place during the classroom meeting time. Following the readings, students were given an activity, like role-playing or a writing assignment attached to the literature. Students were also

instructed to think and planned how they would practice the social skill during their interactions throughout the week.

Using sociograms, anecdotal records, tally charts and surveys, the author was able to identify the progress of students throughout the six-week period. The three social skills the researcher focused on were: 1) students verbal interruptions or blurting; 2) cooperating in small groups and; 3) student self-assessment on how they relate to other students. Elley concluded that student behaviors in these three areas improved from the use of bibliotherapy in addition to the activities attached to the literature. However, the research does not identify if any of the students had trauma-adverse experiences that may influence other behaviors not identified.

Bibliotherapy has also had an impact on students with other stressors, such as perfectionism – which may or may not be a factor of a traumatic event. Zousel, in an experimental study, compares acquisition and enjoyment of learning about perfections under two conditions: bibliotherapy and analysis and construction of cartoons with primary grade students (Zousel, 2013). The participants include 46 elementary students from Iowa (21 male, 25 female) and 32 European American, 8 African American, 4 Hispanic, one Native American and one Asian American. The method of this study provided a pre- and post test with control and experimental conditions under the same instructor. Students in both groups had very low scores on the pretest and showed some improvement on the post test. The experimental group that received cartoons with questions about the cartoons, revealed greater improvement than the control group. The control group that received bibliotherapy showed enthusiasm with the readings, however waned during the weeks. Students complained of being bored and less engaged towards the end of the study. The results of the study indicated that students were more engaged in the cartoon experimental group than the bibliotherapy only. Its limitations must be noted as the author

including the more affluent, suburban demographic of the student participants and may have a different result in other, more urban areas. The study was also limited to the idea of perfectionism rather than addressing traumatic events. Unlike Elley, Zousel did not include additional activities for the bibliotherapy group besides discussion whereas the experimental group were able to receive a half drawn cartoon and able to engage in completing the form. The control group's responses in further study might differ if additional reinforcing activities were also present.

All of the literature presented features the three themes explored for this thesis: discipline and referrals; students with ACE and; bibliotherapy to address students' social-emotional needs and provide models of self-regulation and development of social skills.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Bibliotherapy has been a method of providing a therapeutic means to help children through the use of literature in clinical settings. However, it has an increased usage in educational environments, including the classroom. Bibliotherapy is defined as using books to help people understand and solve problems (Schreur, 2006). In the classroom, bibliotherapy has its function in cooperative learning groups and literature circles. Cooperative learning groups provides safety and ensures inclusivity and participation of all students through the activities (Elley, 2014). Using the social-emotional learning (SEL) literature circles, students are able to identify with the characters and their behaviors and learn through the literature how to navigate and regulate personal challenges. For students with adverse childhood experiences (ACE), or complex traumas, working within the typical classroom structure is difficult if they are incapable of self-regulating and have typical relational attachment (Brunzell, Waters, & Stokes, 2015).

As a result, there is a direct correlation between students with multiple ACEs, multiple student discipline referrals (SDRs) and suspensions. Despite this ongoing process of sending SDRs and in or out of school suspensions, the behaviors and the deficits are not met, resulting in a cyclical adverse response that continues throughout the school years of the student's life. Studies have proven suspensions are ineffective and perhaps giving at-risk students exactly what they are seeking (Schreur, 2006). If at-risk students tend to have multiple ACEs and/or traumas, also suffer from damaged regulatory abilities and disordered attachment styles that lead to behaviors resulting in SDRs and suspensions, then teacher-led SEL Literature Circles could provide resources to repair some of these deficits. Thus, the question for this research proposed: does SEL literature circles increase positive behaviors and reduce SDRs in at-risk students? This

section will address the methodology including the design of the study, the participants, setting, procedures and analysis.

Design

This qualitative/quantitative action research was designed to model the ideal setting to conduct a study that required a pre-/post surveying of participants and their teachers, reviewing the previous year SDRs on the participants and identifying common behaviors that led to repeat SDRs in 2017-18 school year. The majority of past behaviors exhibited were aggressive behaviors including: bullying, profanity, physical violence and using derogatory/abusive language. Therefore the focus for this study was examining how to regulate and control intense emotions like anger that often result in unexpected behavior. The student participants participated in a three-week after school SEL literature circle led by the researcher in a classroom setting. Students read an SEL graphic novel, *Chillax! How Ernie Learns to Chill Out, Relax, and Take Charge of His Anger* (Marino Carver, 2012). It is a story about a sixth grader, Ernie who has had several negative incidents at school and home due to his anger. When he meets Mrs. Spiagga, a counselor, she coaches him how to use SWIFT B strategies to reduce anger: sing a song, walk away, imagine yourself laughing, fake a smile, take cover and breathe. The teacher/researcher, experienced in conducting cooperative groups and literature circles acted as facilitator, a positive encourager of participants, enforced expectations, and guided the discussion. Other students were assigned different roles and presented questions to the group to keep the discussion focus (Schreur, 2006). During reading or literature circles, participants practiced social emotional skills during the literature circles, self-regulation and relational attachment through group activities to identify literature through an emotional lens, act out and de-escalated emotions as portrayed in the literature and highlighted and coded emotional shifts

identified in the readings (Brunzell et al., 2015). Finally, student participants are given a “challenge” that they will practice in their own classrooms based on what they’ve read and modeled from the text. Student behaviors throughout the day were monitored daily through a teacher contract to track behaviors and recognize growth. Students who’ve met their daily target goals were given a reward and celebrated in the end of each week by the group for those goals met.

Participants

The participants are six 4th and 3rd graders, ages 8 -10 from a Title I elementary school in Monterey County. All males, all identified as Hispanic. The certificated educators at the school are predominately white and female, with four Hispanic female educators and one African-American female teacher. The classified staff is predominately Hispanic/Latino female with two identified as white. The students selected have a range of classroom behaviors, from moderate to severe behavior – two of the six students have academic challenges as well. Five of the six students have been identified as having multiple ACEs. Based on these factors, they are considered at-risk and “high flyers” that required more supervision and attention than others. Some of the participants had received numerous SDRs in the previous year and had parental consent to participate in this study to increase positive behaviors that affect their achievements in the classroom. Four of the student participants were assigned to the researcher’s second grade class and the other two students attended her class for specific course instruction. Due to being in the researcher’s second grade instruction for language arts, all the students were familiar with reciprocal teacher, requiring student roles and traditional literature circles.

Setting

The setting for this study was assigned to a teacher's classroom at Pacific Peninsula Elementary School in Central California. Participants identified by their teachers as candidates for the Boss Leader Reader's Circle (BLRC) in the teacher's classroom, after school on select days. The school is a Title I, working class/socioeconomically disadvantaged community blended with more affluent neighborhoods within a five-mile radius. Overall the political climate is a blend as well of democrats as well as conservative republicans. The school district is also a blend of different socioeconomic, ethnic and documented community members. The school is nearby a military center and many natural resource centers. Within the school is a predominately Latino student population with a mixture of document and undocumented families and a large contingent from Oaxaca. The African-American and white student populations are at 2% and the remaining students comprised of Pacific Islander, Asian and students identified as two or more races. Many of these students are also enrolled in one of three after school programs either on or off campus. The selection of the classroom is the researcher's assigned class. Since the students are not her current assigned students, her classroom will be viewed as a neutral, safe zone for the students to explore the readings and their responses.

Instruments

This study utilized three types of Likert scale surveys. The parent questionnaire, "Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18 (CBCL)" (Achenbach, 2001) (see Figure 1) examined selective behaviors that were observed in the home environment. The second form, "Teacher Report Form (TRF)" (Achenbach, 2001) (see Figure 2) was completed by the current grade level teacher that nominated the participant student. The criteria for students who qualify for the

program include: 1) students identified on grouping cards as “low” in behavior; and 2) students who’ve had multiple major/minor Student Discipline Referrals (SDRs) the previous year. There will be a selection of four students per 4th/5th grade class, two participants and two alternatives. The post TRF will examine what behaviors were observed and practice during the weeks of treatment and if behaviors have been reduced or had ceased.

Students completed an Anger Management Pre/Post Survey (Figure 3) with the researcher prior to treatment that measured what students assessed about their anger before treatment and after treatment. Student participants along with parents attended an informational meeting and received a student assent and parent consent form to agree in participation of the research.

The selected book that will be used for this research is *Chillax! How Ernie Learns to Chill Out, Relax, and Take Charge of His Anger* by Marcella Marino Carver. Each student will have his/her own copy of the book and a Boss Leader Reader Circle workbook (see Figure 4). The workbook contained worksheets for them to examine their own challenges based on what they learned about in the selected chapters. It also provided a “class challenge” that presents a letter to their teacher describing the challenge and asking the teacher to record their progress on the given challenging behavior they are practicing that week. At the end of the week, they return the teacher’s chart and conclude the week BRC with reflection and discovery. Although the teacher will act as discussion leader during the sessions, each student will be responsible for a task during the BRC meetings: 1) the time keeper will keep track during the meeting; 2) the questioner leads discussion of questions students have about the story; 3) the summarizer will be responsible for summarizing the chapter and identifying key events and details; 4) the literary reactor will compare how events and feelings in the story may compare to experiences in real

life; 5) the connector will connect the characters and events relate to the participants' live; and 6) the skill master will introduce the new skill based on the readings that all the students will practice throughout the week. The literature circle meetings are adapted from *Reading A to Z* Literature Circle guidelines.

Procedures

Introductory BLR Circle : Week One, Meeting One: Introduction of Boss Leader

BLR Circle/Challenge One

At the initial meeting, the researcher/facilitator met with students, introduced them to the Boss Leader Reading Circle and informed them of its purpose and objectives. Students were seated at a semi-circular desk. Student participants received a BLRC folder with a copy of *Chillax!*, the BLRC literary circle role guide card, and a journal. The first meeting established the group norms as determined by the group and the facilitator and the initial reading of *Chillax!* Students will review and repeat to the agreed norms and the Discussion Leader (facilitator) will open the meeting with the Time Keeper. Students will participate in their assigned roles and summarize, question, track the character's behaviors, motives and actions and describe what we can learn from the character; connect to our immediate environment and how similar behaviors affect us in the school or in our personal life.

Skill Practice #1: What Makes Me So Angry?

The BLRC was introduced to the main character Ernie who faces difficulties as a sixth grader and resorts to anger. Participants are asked to inquire within what makes them angry and identify triggers. Participants wrote their responses and discussed how the main character's responses resonated with their own experiences.

After students listed their triggers, the students also identified what physically happens to their bodies when they are angry. Student workbooks include a checklist and space for students to add other behaviors they noticed that were not listed. Then participants reread the story and identified what Ernie's triggers were. Based on the text, these triggers are called "having a full backpack". Students were given a challenge to find large stones that listed the events Ernie experienced and placed them in a backpack. Students were asked to try to lift the backpack only to find it so full of rocks its difficult to lift or carry. After this exercise, participants learned the strategy, SWIFT B. In this lesson, students learned what the acronym stood for and were introduced to three skills: singing a song, imagine themselves laughing and fake a smile. The skill master, assisted by the facilitator led the participants and students were able to practice with each other and identify songs they could sing if they felt any sense of anger.

Students were given their first challenge to practice the three skills during the week and at the end of the week during the second meeting, students were expected to provide feedback.

Week One, Meeting Two: Check In/SWIFT B Skills Review

In a similar arrangement to Meeting #1, students will gather and review meeting norms. The Facilitator conducted debriefing from the previous meeting. The Summarizer reviewed the story discussed from the last meeting. Through the question leader and facilitator, students provided feedback of their experience and the facilitator checked and noted students' behavior progress reports. All students who've returned their progress report with favorable reviews received a pencil as a reward.

Week Two, Meeting Three: Anger and the Brain

The meeting protocol is similar to meetings #2, where the facilitator begins with greeting and checking in with participants. The summarizer reviewed the story discussed the previous meeting and the questioner addressed questions from the group before reviewing the next reading. During the discussion the facilitator and skill master focused on what occurs in the brain when someone becomes angry. Rereading a selection from the text, participants learned how the prehistoric brain was designed to fight or flight when threatened.

Skill Practice #2: Walk Away, Take Cover and Breathe

The next skill students practiced when confronted with the fight or flight response, how to regulate the brain by choosing to walk away, take cover, and let others know a break is needed and/or breathing practice. For these three challenges, students had to practice how to calm the mind to remove themselves away from a conflict and how to communicate that need to others. The skill master modeled using the sentence frame for the students with assistance from the facilitator and students in pairs practiced. The next skill introduced, modeled and practiced was the breathing practice. Students, provided with a quiet space, practiced three breathing strategies: Calm-down breathing, Deep breathing practice and Lazy 8 breathing.

For the student challenge, participants were asked to have a conversation with their teacher and their parent/guardian about a plan to self-regulate and reduce anger through walking away, taking cover and breathing practice. Students practiced with their teacher and parent/guardian as part of the challenge.

Week Two, Meeting Four: Student Debrief/Worksheet Completion and Review

The facilitator opened the BLR Circle with each participant providing feedback, including victories and challenges. Students returned their behavior progress reports and the summarizer reviewed what they had learned in the past week. Students receive a pencil as an award.

Week Three, Meeting Five: Unloading the Emotional Load

Students were familiar and have practiced the SWIFT B strategies. In meeting five, student participants reread how Ernie relaxed by applying daily practices that release stress. After modeling these practices, the students learned how to unpack their emotional loads through visualization, exercise, writing in a gratitude journal, watching funny shows and going outside for the light. The facilitator led the discussion on how these practices release emotional loads that students, like Ernie experienced in the story.

Skill Practice #3: Visualization

Using their workbooks, student participant were instructed to focus on a photo of a calm nature scene and led through a guided visualization by the facilitator, using the script in the workbook. For challenge three, the facilitator asked all participants during the week to use the Chillax! Checklist to list all activities they were able to complete each day. Students were also provided with a scenic postcard they can use in class to practice when needed during the week.

Week Three, Meeting Six: Student Debrief/Worksheet Completion and Review

Students gathered in the classroom and the facilitator collected student progress reports and feedback about their experiences. The summarizer reviewed the previous events in the text and the questioner opens the BRL Circle for questions from participants. The skill master

reviewed the practices students learned within the three weeks and students who've completed the challenge received a pencil.

Week Four, Meeting Seven: How to Communicate Better

The final week of the BLR Circle, the facilitator addressed a key component in reducing anger and increasing positive behavior through communication and power-based language. The summarizer reviewed the story with participants and the questioner inquired questions prior to the reading of the next selection. Students read page 62 that discusses the importance of how to effectively communicate using "I" statements and specifying what is "needed". The skill master modeled with the facilitator, using the script in the workbook how to use power-based language to communicate feeling and need. Participants practiced with partners, provided feedback and were given their final challenge. For their final challenge, students were asked if confronted with a minor situation (e.g. pencil taken from them, cutting in line, etc.) for them to use the assertive communication and observe what resulted. Students were also provided the post CBCL enclosed in an envelope and returned envelope to give to their parents. The facilitator gives the post TRF to participants' teachers.

Week Four, Meeting Eight: Conclusion and Learning Celebrations

The last meeting, student participants returned their parents (CBCL) and the facilitator met individually with students the day before to complete the Student Anger Assessment questionnaire. Once all data is collected, the facilitators conducted a learning celebration and presented each participant with a certificate of completion and reward for their contribution to the study.

Analysis

Data was analyzed based on the Two Factor Theory, in which “trauma-affected students need to be given opportunities in the classroom to increase psychological resources and build upon strengths toward well-being—not only reduce stress and disrupted attachments ... strengths and weaknesses are not opposites, and one does not learn about strengths by addressing one’s weaknesses. Even as a trauma-affected student struggles with relational attachment or self-regulatory needs, he/she may also show promise in specific academic content or character strengths domains, and these strengths and potentialities can be deliberately nurtured in addition to the repair of dysregulated emotions and disrupted attachments” (Brunzell, Stokes, & Waters, 2016).

Qualitative data was analyzed through selective coding and subthemes for students’ behavioral challenges and tasks. The primary to display this data is using a mixed methods with narrative since the study included student participants in real time activities and graphs of recorded changes throughout the weeks. Students and teacher data will be analyzed the previous year, the beginning of the school year and weekly based on surveys that will be conducted and review of weekly contract reports. To determine the effectiveness of students behavior – especially aggressive or anger – teachers will be asked to complete a Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment Teacher Report Form (TRF) for ages 6-18 in pre- and post-treatment.

Qualitative data will be analyzed through selective coding and subthemes for students’ behavioral challenges and tasks. Student discipline referrals and teacher data were analyzed the previous year, the beginning of the school year and weekly based on surveys that were collected and reviewed weekly. To determine the effectiveness of the SEL literature circle on student

behavior – especially aggressive or anger – parents, teachers and students completed a pre and post questionnaires to denote any changes throughout the treatment. Participating teachers completed the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment Teacher Report Form (TRF) for ages 6-18 in pre- and post-treatment; parents were asked to complete the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL); and students completed the .

Summary of Chapter

The methodology of using a bibliotherapy format in SEL literature circles to identify dysregulatory behaviors and patterns within characters and identify positive modeling of self-regulation for emotions. The student participants, text selection and activities designed for this treatment will generate the two-factor theory response of providing opportunities to explore unexpected behavior and practice increasing resilience in a safe environment. Providing students with challenging work to examine and analyze, opportunities to learn skills to regulate unexpected behaviors and supports that students were able to apply in their classrooms and home environment increased student self-efficacy and self-esteem in their ability to solve problems effectively without resorting to anger.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

This research study is to address if using Social Emotional Learning within a Literature Circle format with elementary school boys would increase positive behaviors and thus reduce Student Discipline Referrals. This analysis will examine students' behavior prior to treatment, student reflections and observations during treatment and post survey data. This research will also examine how the use of literature circles and social emotional learning literature are utilized to address the three components to create successful behavior outcomes in the classroom: Using

literature themes that resonate with the student participants, provide critical thinking skills and teach emotional stability to deal with stressful situations in and out of the classroom.

Data Presentation

The data that is being presented includes the student participants, ages 8-10, in third and fourth grades respectively. All of the students attend a Title I public elementary school. The data collected includes initial interviews with the participants about their past experiences in dealing with aggressive behaviors.

Student Anger Management Questionnaire (Pre-Treatment)

Students completed the Student Anger Management Questionnaire Pre-/Post-Treatment, (Hunter, 2011) prior to the Boss Reader Leader Circle with a questionnaire given to the participants from the researcher/teacher. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions with a Likert scale from “almost never to almost always” and included questions that addressed categories of dealing with someone’s anger, negotiating, using self-control, standing up for your rights, responding to teasing, avoiding trouble with others, keeping out of fights, making a complaint, answering a complaint and dealing with an accusation.

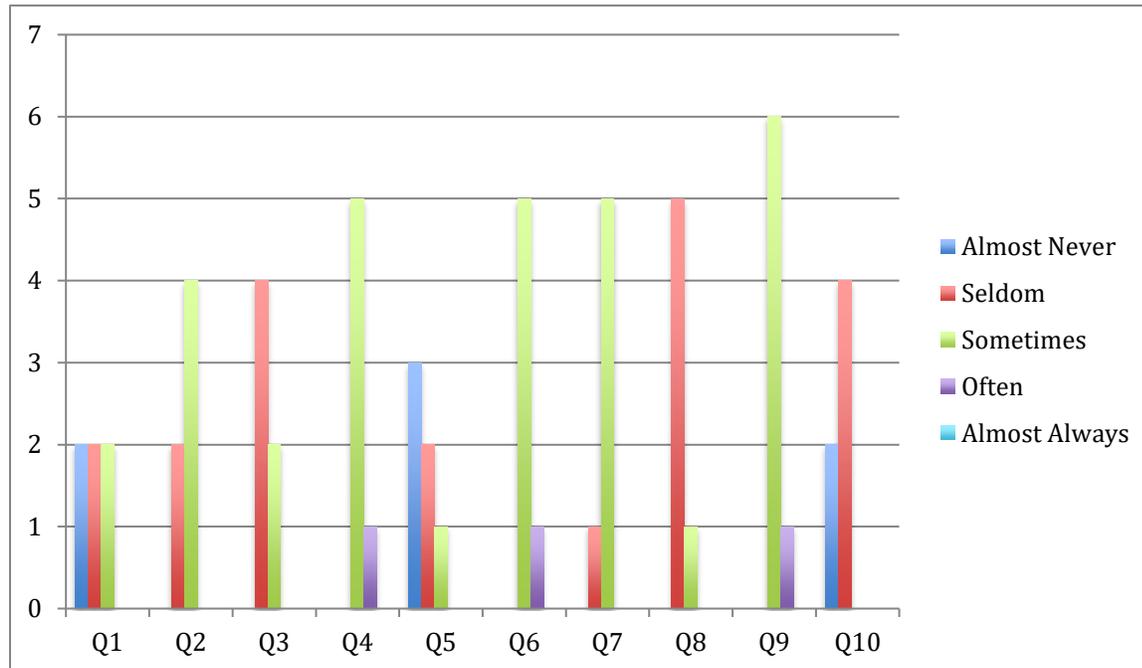


Figure 5. Pre-treatment of Student Anger Management Questionnaire.

The Student Anger Management Questionnaire was delivered at the preliminary meeting with the selected participants. The questions were read aloud to each student privately and answered. Most of the students answered questions in the “sometimes” range regarding possible triggers, however some selected “almost never” for questions: #2; Do you arrive at a plan that satisfies both you and others who have taken different positions? #5 Do you deal with being teased by others in ways that allow you to remain in control of yourself?; and #10 Do you figure out what you are being accused of and why, then decide on the best way to deal with the person who made the accusation? (Hunter, 2011). For these participants, establishing empathy in a conflict, self-control and regulation and responding to accusations or disagreement had the greatest tendency of a negative response. It can also be noted in the survey, the boys’ responses to questions #4 Do you assert your rights by letting people know where you stand on issues?, #6 Do you stay out of

situations that might get you into trouble? and #9 Do you try to arrive at a fair solution to someone’s justified complaint?, students responded positively to “sometimes” and “often”, indicating that they will try to address or avoid conflicts if possible.

11-18	Clinical range
8-10	Borderline clinical range
0-9	Normal Range

Teacher Report Form for Ages 6-18 (Pre-Treatment) (Raw Score)

	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E
Aggressive Behavior	12	0	12	7	4
Rule-Breaking Behavior	3	1	3	3	0
Social Problems	8	2	0	1	2
Anxious/Depressed	4	11	1	0	3

Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18 (Pre-Treatment) (Raw Score)

	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E
Aggressive Behavior	17	3	9	9	7
Rule-Breaking Behavior	5	1	4	5	2
Social Problems	6	2	0	0	0
Anxious/Depressed	6	15	0	3	2

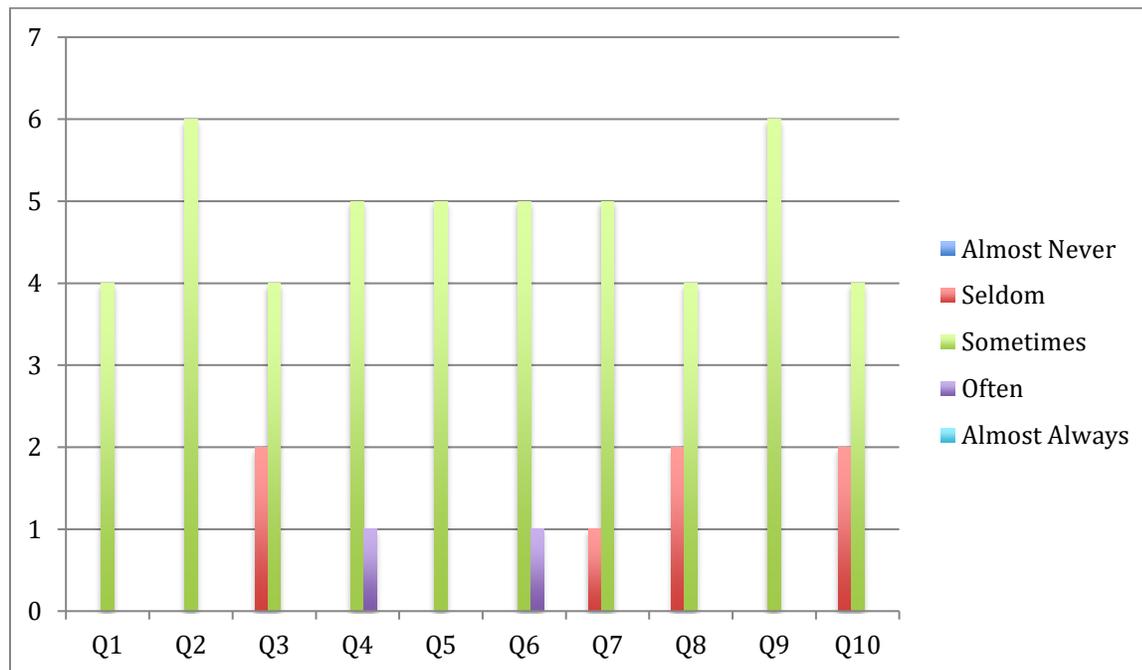
Tables 1 & 2. Teacher Report Form and Child Behavior Checklist.

The Child Behavioral Checklist and Teacher Report Form for ages 6-18 were from the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (Achenbach, 2018). Although this assessment instrument is used primarily in clinical and school special needs indicators for students, the instrument has questions that specifically pertain to aggression, rule breaking behavior, social problems and anxious/depression in children. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was only limited to those questions for those categories and only the raw score was used to determine the scale instead of the T-Score and percentile as the instrument provides with its scoring. It should be noted due to the time period of the treatment start early in the beginning school year, it was the previous teacher for these students that completed the TRF pre-assessment. The students selected included students from the researcher’s previous class,

therefore, the researcher had to respond based on minors and notes from the students' previous year.

The comparison of the two surveys showed that for some students, such as Student A had an increased raw score on the CBCL for aggressive behavior compared to the TRL, although both indicated high degrees of aggressive behavior. There was also an increase in rule-breaking behavior on the CBCL. Only one student had a high range of anxiety/depression at home that is consisted with the student's profile and is increased also on the CBCL.

Figure 11. Post-Treatment Analysis: Student Anger Management Questionnaire



Teacher Report Form for Ages 6-18 (Post-Treatment) (Raw Score)

	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E
Aggressive Behavior	9	0	10	6	4

	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E
Rule-Breaking Behavior	1	0	2	0	0
Social Problems	8	1	0	0	0
Anxious/Depressed	3	9	0	0	2

Table 3. Teacher Report Form Post Treatment Raw Scores.

Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18 (Post-Treatment) (Raw Score)

	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E
Aggressive Behavior	11	0	6	5	5
Rule-Breaking Behavior	2	0	2	1	0
Social Problems	6	2	0	0	1
Anxious/Depressed	4	7	0	0	1

Table 4. Post Treatment Child Behavior Checklist.

The post-treatment data from the Student Anger Management Questionnaire and the TRF and CBCL revealed reductions in behavior and students' self-assessments. None of the participants received student discipline referrals during the time of the treatment and received positive

feedback from their current teachers in behavior. One student did not complete the treatment with the group, however was provided with the book for his own reading.

Each meeting, student participants had an opportunity to debrief and share their experiences for the week. Participants were able to provide feedback each week to the researcher that affirmed the post TRF and CBCL. Based on the raw score data, students showed a reduction of an average of -2 points in the category of aggressive behavior, -1 points on reducing rule-breaking behaviors and a reduction in social problems at school.

Students will present each week a check-in goal sheet that they review daily with their classroom teacher on their positive behavior goals. Based on the data presented, student participants were able to increase positive behaviors, reduce the potential for office discipline referrals and practice some of the strategies in real life situations.

Data Analysis

When analyzing the data students were able to use the graphic novel literature about anger to identify how the main character responded to external situations and what the character was able to do to diffuse anger and resolve his problems. Conversations analyzed how students responded to story; Ernie was a relatable character whose anger and behavior caused him to have social problems with relating to his peers and internal feelings about himself due to his inability to control his anger. Students discussed the character and each discussion included their own experience of the character's feelings in their own lives. Many of the students discussed how they had similar outbursts and feelings acted out in their home environment even when not shown in their school environment. Students were able to address their "triggers" to situations that lead to their discomfort and thus a negative response. Many of the triggers included: being

teased, feeling inadequate about being able to do an activity, lack of self-efficacy, and student/sibling disagreements.

The structure of the literature circle provided a format that required all participants to play a role, take part in the discussion, model and practice one of the SWIFT B skills. Similar to the research on how positive behavioral interventions and supports can be effective with behaviors on middle school students on buses (Collins & Ryan, 2016), participants had a brief intervention phase to practice skills. Unlike the Collins and Ryan article, students did not receive the adequate amount of time to practice, however there were reductions in behavior at home and in school.

The BRLC focused on the TIPE (trauma-informed positive education model) that focused on 1) repairing regulatory abilities; 2) repairing disrupted attachment and 3) increasing psychological resources (Brunzell et al., 2016b). Having a teacher that was familiar with all of the student participants provided easier access to identify strengths based on previous behaviors when students completed each task. Students felt safe working in a familiar classroom to practice with peers that were not identified by behavior but association with the researcher/teacher. Chillax! provided co-regulatory experiences including self-talk, building resilience and emotional building exercises. The data and results indicated that using Social Emotional Learning Literature Circles can be beneficial to achieve similar results.

Their response to the activity and their outcomes of application in their classrooms both showed positive results. The data also examined if teachers recognized any changes in a students, and what feedback was provided to support the student. The data revealed a reduction in student aggressive behaviors as they had an increase positive response to the literature group

instruction and reflection on the reading and activities. The charts will identify the number of office discipline referrals received since the beginning of the treatment.

Interpretations

It is expected that the data and analysis will show boys being able to participate in small groups with effective, relatable and challenging material in a graphic novel format will allow students to discuss and critically examine how they can regulate their behaviors for a positive effect in the classrooms. Students will feel comfortable discussing a character whom shares similar challenges in school and home and how he is able to overcome his challenges. The group format will allow students to not feel judged and the established norms will provide anonymity. Students will also have opportunities to read on their own the novel and provide feedback. It is expected that the findings will show positive results for using social emotional learning literature circles with a teacher facilitator to teach emotional regulation to students. The implications of this study will include additional interventions for teachers and administrators to help students with repeat referrals or aggressive behaviors self-regulate and managed their emotions. As education moves towards addressing needs of students beyond academics, including trauma informed positive education – social emotional learning literature circles can continue to challenge students academically and include critical thinking about text and themes that relate to the students' social emotional needs as well.

Finally, the use of mindfulness as one of the regulatory abilities in TIPE that was also applied to Ilbay's study,(İlbay, 2016). using the *The Little Prince* as a model in bibliotherapy was also adapted to the *Chillax!* literature that provided mindfulness activities such as visualization and imagining oneself laughing to self-regulate abilities in students. Students were able to transfer focus to a positive image and regulate their behavior accordingly. Again, this approach supports

Brunzell's suggestion that the regulatory needs must be addressed initially and with the reading of *Chillax!*, participants could use the book as a focus on discussing its transformative effects.

Summary/Conclusion

In summary, the research was to determine if using bibliotherapy or social emotional learning literature would reduce students' aggressive behavior and thus reduce discipline or student office referrals. Participants initially indicated in their Anger Management Questionnaire that they showed more aggression in situations in which they were teased or challenged. After the treatment, the post-survey showed a reduction in these behaviors and student interviews revealed that practicing the strategies as modeled in *Chillax!* was helpful in reducing negative behaviors and replacing them with positive interventions. Overall, the students found a positive means to respond to high climatic or triggering situations at school and in their own environments. However, this study had some limitations and education recommendations for future consideration as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Thesis Recommendations

After weeks of having small group participation in this SEL Literature Circle, the researcher was able to broadly approach the original question, if bibliotherapy – referred to for the intents and purposes of this research – as social emotional learning literary circles (or SEL Lit Circles) can increase positive behaviors and thus reduce classroom referrals in elementary school boys affected by trauma? The students selected met the required criteria of having experienced several adverse childhood experiences and had past behaviors that resulted in referrals due to anger. The students also had difficulties resolving issues within themselves that ultimately result in outward behavior that affected either relationships at home, school or academics. The purpose of this research is identifying another means for teachers to access student learning in self-regulation within the classroom environment. The Boss Readers Leader Group, provided a safe space within the classroom to discuss among peers their feelings about anger, identify triggers of their anger and practice ways to diffuse anger in class and home.

In recapping the Summary of findings, students who participated throughout the program were able to show an indication of increase in positive behaviors in the classroom and at home. The research provided modeling, reflection and feedback for students to actively practice self-regulating behavior before responding to an incident.

Finding Summary/Interpretations

Overall, the students who participated showed a reduction in anger and reacting to incidents, some students even showed a reduction in anxiousness in the home and school environment. Students' parent and teacher survey results reflected an increase in positive behaviors, even some respondents sharing how students were able to walk away from

volatile incidents through the practices in the SEL literature or sought to talk to an adult rather than approach an incident with initial anger. In this approach, using Social Emotional Learning literature to teach, discuss and model for students how to identify feelings and behaviors and self-regulate through practice of the activities can be considered used with small groups within a classroom or during an after school program.

According to Brunzell, three domain are typically affected in students: 1) repairing regulatory abilities; 2) repairing disrupted attachment; and 3) increasing psychological resources. (“Brunzell, Stokes & Waters (2015) Trauma Informed Education.pdf,”). The purpose of having the Boss Reader Leaders Circle was to provide students with a safe, structured environment of the classroom for students to read a graphic novel with a relatable character whose challenges may resemble some of their own and referring to the character and his actions, the group could discuss and empathized with his behavior and feel encouraged to model with peers and their facilitator new social emotional skills they can safely practice with peers prior to practicing at home and at school. Students in the BRLC represented the vast number of student population at Pacific View Elementary with multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences, and complex traumas and like many students, only a few have received some counseling onsite, however due to limited resources, do not have continual access. Other students in the circle have not received counseling. Therefore, providing an environment within the classroom setting offers an additional resource for teachers needing to teach skills to regulate and de-escalate negative behaviors.

Lessons Learned/Educational Implications

Overall, the BRLC’s impact on the group dynamic was a sense of shared experience in their views and reactions to anger. Student participants were able to open up to the

group about how what their triggers were and how they could relate to the character Ernie when feeling frustrated and unable to calm their mind in states of anger or excitement. The research also allowed myself as the facilitator to guide rather than instruct students on the process and become transparent with my own feelings and reactions. Thus the group with the facilitator found a great benefit being able to practice the SWIFT-B strategies. As students reported they were able to practice some of these in class or at home, as facilitator, I was able to also practice – although as with the students, there were some moments that were challenging and thus needed to make the decision to “W” walk away. One student reported this led to him avoiding a conflict on the playground with another student. Other students found these strategies also effective for reducing “feeling nervous” or anxiousness. The student participants were also former second grade students of the researcher and so capturing the growth of these students in this process was especially gratifying as each child experienced some levels of ACEs during their enrollment in the researcher’s class. It should also be noted that use of the graphic novel, *Chillax!* made the experience less of an academic experience and more social emotional learning experience, that children felt at ease with the facilitator and participants. Students were also able to discuss and speak opening in a small group setting with multiage and level students that they typically did not interact before. These students now are familiar with each other and have established amicable relationships outside of the classroom or group.

Another benefit of the selection of *Chillax!* is the ability to discuss and practice strategies written specifically in the book for students. The story structure allowed participants to not only follow the lead character, Ernie’s journey but work alongside with him in their own mastery of skills.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that educators providing a SEL literature circle with small groups, using a text such as *Chillax!* that provides opportunities for discussion and activity. Although this research was conducted after school as all the children participants were enrolled in after school programs at the school site, this can be conducted with smaller groups during lunch or independent study. It is advisable that time for conducting a BRLC must consider the students' history with ACEs or complex traumas, subject matter and access to privacy. It is not expected that similar results would occur if other students or classmates were present that didn't have shared experiences. The small group within a structured setting allowed students to feel safe, without judgment or criticism. Using the literature circle format where each participant had a significant role in the group provided another level of efficacy with the facilitator's input as a senior member and if necessary moderator. The small group is also practical for those student participants who are struggling readers and the facilitator allows a read aloud for the benefit of those students' needs. Some of the remaining participants have requested to continue participating and further discussion of lengthening their experience will be considered.

Limitations of Research

One of the limits of this research was the amount of time to conduct the full implementation of the project in order to see long term effects from students. The initial four weeks were reduced to three weeks due to scheduling conflicts, therefore it would be beneficial for any replica of this study to conduct a longer length of time and include pre and longer periods of post-growth analysis once students are no longer participants. This research would benefit from a longitudinal study of five to eight weeks that includes a

school year analysis of student behaviors and referrals and it's reduction throughout the school year. Another limitation is the already established relationship the participants had with the facilitator, results and process might differ in a shorter study with participants unknown to the facilitator. Students were all familiar with the facilitator and therefore has knowledge of their needs, background and their challenges in second grade, provided better opportunities to guide the discussion and activities to meet their social-emotional needs. Therefore, it is suggested that further research is conducted with students who may not be familiar with the facilitator.

Future Research Directions

In curriculum development, it would be beneficial for educators to identify key social emotional components that may need more focus or addressing in classrooms and in addition to the current SEL curriculum, include specific SEL literature that can be used in a small group instruction that provides students with consistent practice and feedback. Educators and school counselors will also have to consider book selection including topic, characters (including cultural responsive literature), and if possible, other language translations to provide parents/guardians; along with the appropriate reading level for participants. This will ensure if participants are able to take the books home to re-read and review with ease and share their reading with their parents or guardians.

Summary/Conclusion

Using social emotional literature in a literature circle format with male students with specific needs of social and emotional challenges, provides elementary school males opportunities to empathize with a fictional character that has similar challenges. Working

in a small group with an adult facilitator allowed the Boss Reader Leaders Group to work within a safe, structured environment to practice with each other new skills learned, discuss pitfalls, triggers and successes while learning how to regulate their own aggression in school and home. Despite the treatment being three weeks, students were able to apply skills from the *Chillax!* Graphic novel to their own personal experiences and receive support from their peers on their triumphs and challenges. As stated in recommendations, it would benefit further study to provide a longer term treatment and follow up six months after the literature circle concludes. Overall, bibliotherapy presented through social emotional literature in a literature circle provides students with social-emotional challenges a safe, structured and supportive environment that can be provided to students by teachers, administrators as well as school counselors in a nonclinical form.

Appendix

 Please print **CHILD BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST FOR AGES 6-18** For office use only
ID #

CHILD'S FULL NAME First Middle Last			PARENTS' USUAL TYPE OF WORK, even if not working now. <i>(Please be specific — for example, auto mechanic, high school teacher, homemaker, laborer, lathe operator, shoe salesman, army sergeant.)</i>			
CHILD'S GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl		CHILD'S AGE	CHILD'S ETHNIC GROUP OR RACE		PARENT 1 (or FATHER) TYPE OF WORK _____	
TODAY'S DATE Mo. ___ Day ___ Year ___		CHILD'S BIRTHDATE Mo. ___ Day ___ Year ___		PARENT 2 (or MOTHER) TYPE OF WORK _____		
GRADE IN SCHOOL _____		Please fill out this form to reflect your view of the child's behavior even if other people might not agree. Feel free to print additional comments beside each item and in the space provided on page 2. Be sure to answer all items.		THIS FORM FILLED OUT BY: (print your full name) _____		
NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL <input type="checkbox"/>				Your gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Man <input type="checkbox"/> Woman <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____		
				Your relation to the child: <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Step Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent (specify): _____		

I. Please list the sports your child most likes to take part in. For example: swimming, baseball, skating, skate boarding, bike riding, fishing, etc.

<input type="checkbox"/> None a. _____ b. _____ c. _____	Less Than Average	Average	More Than Average	Don't Know	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Don't Know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

II. Please list your child's favorite hobbies, activities, and games, other than sports. For example: video games, dolls, reading, piano, crafts, cars, computers, singing, etc. (Do **not** include listening to radio, TV, or other media.)

<input type="checkbox"/> None a. _____ b. _____ c. _____	Less Than Average	Average	More Than Average	Don't Know	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Don't Know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

III. Please list any organizations, teams, or groups your child belongs to.

<input type="checkbox"/> None a. _____ b. _____ c. _____	Less Active	Average	More Active	Don't Know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. Please list any jobs or chores your child has. For example: doing dishes, babysitting, making bed, working in store, etc. (Include both paid and unpaid jobs and chores.)

<input type="checkbox"/> None a. _____ b. _____ c. _____	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Don't Know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Be sure you answered all items. Then see other side.

Please print. Be sure to answer all items.

V. 1. About how many close friends does your child have? (Do *not* include brothers & sisters)
 None 1 2 or 3 4 or more

2. About how many times a week does your child do things with any friends outside of regular school hours?
 (Do *not* include brothers & sisters) Less than 1 1 or 2 3 or more

VI. Compared to others of his/her age, how well does your child:

	Worse	Average	Better	
a. Get along with his/her brothers & sisters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Has no brothers or sisters
b. Get along with other kids?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Behave with his/her parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d. Play and work alone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

VII. 1. Performance in academic subjects. Does not attend school because _____

Check a box for each subject that child takes		Failing	Below Average	Average	Above Average
Other academic subjects—for example: computer courses, foreign language, business. Do <i>not</i> include gym, shop, driver's ed., or other nonacademic subjects.	a. Reading, English, or Language Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. History or Social Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. Arithmetic or Math	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d. Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	e. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	f. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	g. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Does your child receive special services or remedial services or attend a special class or special school?
 No Yes—kind of services, class, or school: _____

3. Has your child repeated any grades? No Yes—grades and reasons: _____

4. Has your child had any academic or other problems in school? No Yes—please describe: _____

When did these problems end? No Yes—when? _____

Does your child have an illness or disability (either physical or mental)? No Yes—please describe: _____

What concerns you most about your child?

Please describe the best things about your child.

Please print. Be sure to answer all items.

Below is a list of items that describe children and youths. For each item that describes your child **now or within the past 6 months**, please circle the **2** if the item is **very true or often true** of your child. Circle the **1** if the item is **somewhat or sometimes true** of your child. If the item is **not true** of your child, circle the **0**. Please answer all items as well as you can, even if some do not seem to apply to your child.

0 = Not True (as far as you know)

1 = Somewhat or Sometimes True

2 = Very True or Often True

0 1 2	1. Acts too young for his/her age	0 1 2	32. Feels he/she has to be perfect
0 1 2	2. Drinks alcohol without parents' approval (describe):	0 1 2	33. Feels or complains that no one loves him/her
0 1 2	3. Argues a lot	0 1 2	34. Feels others care out to him/her
0 1 2	4. Fails to finish things he/she starts	0 1 2	35. Feels worthless or inferior
0 1 2	5. There is very little he/she enjoys	0 1 2	36. Gets hurt a lot, accident-prone
0 1 2	6. Bowel movements outside toilet	0 1 2	37. Gets in many fights
0 1 2	7. Bragging, boasting	0 1 2	38. Gets teased a lot
0 1 2	8. Can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long	0 1 2	39. Hangs around with others who get in trouble
0 1 2	9. Can't get his/her mind off certain thoughts; obsessions (describe):	0 1 2	40. Hears sound or voices that aren't there (describe):
0 1 2	10. Can't sit still, restless, or hyperactive	0 1 2	41. Impulsive acts without thinking
0 1 2	11. Clings to adults or too dependent	0 1 2	42. Would rather be alone than with others
0 1 2	12. Complains of loneliness	0 1 2	43. Lying or cheating
0 1 2	13. Confused or seems to be in a fog	0 1 2	44. Bites fingernails
0 1 2	14. Cries a lot	0 1 2	45. Nervous, highstrung, or tense
0 1 2	15. Cruel to animals	0 1 2	46. Nervous movements or twitching (describe):
0 1 2	16. Cruelty, bullying, or meanness to others	0 1 2	47. Nightmares
0 1 2	17. Daydreams or gets lost in his/her thoughts	0 1 2	48. Not liked by other kids
0 1 2	18. Deliberately harms self or attempts suicide	0 1 2	49. Constipated, doesn't move bowels
0 1 2	19. Demands attention	0 1 2	50. Too fearful or anxious
0 1 2	20. Destroys his/her own things	0 1 2	51. Feels dizzy or lightheaded
0 1 2	21. Destroys things belonging to his/her family or others	0 1 2	52. Feels too guilty
0 1 2	22. Disobedient at home	0 1 2	53. Overeating
0 1 2	23. Disobedient at school	0 1 2	54. Overtired without good reason
0 1 2	24. Doesn't eat well	0 1 2	55. Overweight
0 1 2	25. Doesn't get along with other kids	0 1 2	56. Physical problems without know medical cause:
0 1 2	26. Doesn't seem to feel guilty after misbehaving	0 1 2	a. Aches or pains (not stomach or headaches)
0 1 2	27. Easily jealous	0 1 2	b. Headaches
0 1 2	28. Fears at home, school, or elsewhere	0 1 2	c. Nausea, feels sick
0 1 2	29. Fears certain animals, situations, or places, other than school (describe):	0 1 2	d. Problems with eyes (not if corrected by glasses) (describe):
0 1 2	30. Fears going to school	0 1 2	e. Rashes or other skin problems
0 1 2	31. Fears he/she might think or do something bad	0 1 2	f. Stomachaches
		0 1 2	g. Vomiting, throwing up
		0 1 2	h. Other (describe):

Please print. Be sure to answer all items.

0 = Not True (as far as you know)

1 = Somewhat or Sometimes True

2 = Very True or Often True

0	1	2	57. Physically attacks people	0	1	2	84. Strange behavior (describe):
0	1	2	58. Picks nose, skin, or other parts of body (describe):	0	1	2	85. Strange ideas (describe):
0	1	2	59. Plays with own sex parts in public	0	1	2	86. Stubborn, sulky, or irritable
0	1	2	60. Plays with own sex parts too much	0	1	2	87. Sudden changes in mood or feelings
0	1	2	61. Poor school work	0	1	2	88. Sulks or sulkily
0	1	2	62. Poorly coordinated or clumsy	0	1	2	89. Suspicious
0	1	2	63. Prefers being with older kids	0	1	2	90. Swearing or cussing language
0	1	2	64. Prefers being with younger kids	0	1	2	91. Talks about killing
0	1	2	65. Refuses to talk	0	1	2	92. Talks or walks in sleep (describe):
0	1	2	66. Repeats certain acts over and over; compulsions (describe):	0	1	2	Talks too much
0	1	2	67. Runs away from home	0	1	2	94. Cries a lot
0	1	2	68. Screams a lot	0	1	2	95. Temper tantrums or hot temper
0	1	2	69. Secretive, keeps things to self	0	1	2	96. Thinks sex too much
0	1	2	70. Sees things that aren't there (describe):	0	1	2	97. Threatens people
0	1	2	71. Self-conscious or easily embarrassed	0	1	2	98. Thumb-sucking
0	1	2	72. Sets fires	0	1	2	99. Smokes, chews, or sniffs tobacco
0	1	2	73. Sexual problems (describe):	0	1	2	100. Trouble sleeping (describe):
0	1	2	74. Showing off or clowning	0	1	2	101. Truancy, skips school
0	1	2	75. Too shy or timid	0	1	2	102. Underactive, slow moving, or lacks energy
0	1	2	76. Sleeps less than most kids	0	1	2	103. Unhappy, sad, or depressed
0	1	2	77. Sleeps more than most kids during day and/or night (describe):	0	1	2	104. Unusually loud
0	1	2	78. Inattentive or easily distracted	0	1	2	105. Uses drugs for nonmedical purposes (<i>don't</i> include alcohol or tobacco) (describe):
0	1	2	79. Speech problems (describe):	0	1	2	106. Vandalism
0	1	2	80. Starts fights	0	1	2	107. Wets self during the day
0	1	2	81. Talks at home	0	1	2	108. Wets the bed
0	1	2	82. Steals outside the home	0	1	2	109. Whining
0	1	2	83. Stores up too many things he/she doesn't need (describe):	0	1	2	110. Wishes to be of opposite sex
				0	1	2	111. Withdrawn, doesn't get involved with others
				0	1	2	112. Worries
				0	1	2	113. Please write in any problems your child has that were not listed above:
				0	1	2	
				0	1	2	
				0	1	2	

Figure 2.

 **Please print** **TEACHER'S REPORT FORM FOR AGES 6-18** For office use only
ID # _____

Your answers will be used to compare the pupil with other pupils whose teachers have completed similar forms. The information from this form will also be used for comparison with other information about this pupil. Please answer as well as you can, even if you lack full information. Scores on individual items will be combined to identify general patterns of behavior. Feel free to print additional comments beside each item and in the spaces provided on page 2. **Please print, and answer all items.**

PUPIL'S FULL NAME First Middle Last	PUPIL'S AGE	PUPIL'S ETHNIC GROUP OR RACE	PARENTS' USUAL TYPE OF WORK, even if not working now. <i>(Please be specific —for example, auto mechanic, high school teacher, homemaker, laborer, lathe operator, shoe salesman, army sergeant.)</i>
PUPIL'S GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl			PARENT 1 (or father) TYPE OF WORK _____ PARENT 2 (or mother) TYPE OF WORK _____
TODAY'S DATE Mo. ___ Date ___ Year ___	PUPIL'S BIRTHDATE (if known) Mo. ___ Date ___ Year ___		THIS FORM FILLED OUT BY: _____ <i>(print your full name)</i>
GRADE IN SCHOOL	NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL _____ _____		

Your gender: Man Woman Other (specify) _____

Your role at the school:
 Classroom teacher Counselor Other (specify) _____
 Special Educator Administrator Other (specify): _____

I. For how many months have you known this pupil? _____ months

II. How well do you know him/her? 1. Not Well 2. Moderately Well 3. Very Well

III. How much time does he/she spend in your class or service per week? _____

IV. What kind of class or service is it? (Please be specific, e.g., regular 4th grade, 7th grade math, learning disability, counseling, etc.) _____

V. Has he/she ever been referred for special class placement, services, or tutoring?
 Don't know 0. No 1. _____ what kind and when

VI. Has he/she ever repeated any grades? Don't Know No 1. Yes - grades and reasons: _____

VII. Current academic performance. List academic subjects and check box that indicates pupil's performance for each subject:

Academic subject	1. Far below grade	2. Somewhat below grade	3. At grade level	4. Somewhat above grade	5. Far above grade
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Be sure you answered all items. Then see other side.

Please print. Be sure to answer all items.

VIII. Compared to typical pupils of the same age:	1. Much less	2. Somewhat less	3. Slightly less	4. About average	5. Slightly more	6. Somewhat more	7. Much more
1. How hard is he/she working?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. How appropriately is he/she behaving?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How much is he/she learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How happy is he/she?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IX. Most recent achievement test scores (optional):

Name of test	Subject	Date	Percentage or grade level obtained

X. IQ, readiness, or aptitude tests (optional):

Name of test	Date	IQ or equivalent scores

Does this pupil have any illness or disability (physical or mental)? No Yes — please describe:

What concerns you about this pupil?

Please describe your feelings about this pupil:

Please feel free to write any comments about this pupil's work, behavior, or potential, using extra pages if necessary.

Please print. Be sure to answer all items.

Below is a list of items that describe pupils. For each item that describes the pupil **now or within the past 2 months**, please circle the **2** if the item is **very true or often true** of the pupil. Circle the **1** if the item is **somewhat or sometimes true** of the pupil. If the item is **not true** of the pupil, circle the **0**. Please answer all items as well as you can, even if some do not seem to apply to this pupil.

0 = Not True (as far as you know)			1 = Somewhat or Sometimes True			2 = Very True or Often True		
0	1	2	1. Acts too young for his/her age	0	1	2	34. Feels others are out to get him/her	
0	1	2	2. Hums or makes other odd noises in class	0	1	2	35. Feels worthless or inferior	
0	1	2	3. Argues a lot	0	1	2	36. Gets hurt a lot (accident-prone)	
0	1	2	4. Fails to finish things he/she starts	0	1	2	37. Gets in many fights	
0	1	2	5. There is very little he/she enjoys	0	1	2	38. Gets teased a lot	
0	1	2	6. Defiant, talks back to staff	0	1	2	39. Hangs around with pupils who get in trouble	
0	1	2	7. Bragging, boasting	0	1	2	40. Hears sound or voice that aren't there (describe): _____	
0	1	2	8. Can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long	0	1	2	41. Impulsive or acts without thinking	
0	1	2	9. Can't get his/her mind off certain thoughts; obsessions (describe): _____	0	1	2	42. Would rather be alone than with others	
0	1	2	10. Can't sit still, restless, or hyperactive	0	1	2	43. Lying or cheating	
0	1	2	11. Clings to adults or too dependent	0	1	2	44. Bites fingernails	
0	1	2	12. Complains of loneliness	0	1	2	45. Nervous, highstrung, or tense	
0	1	2	13. Confused or seems to be in a fog	0	1	2	46. Nervous movements or twitching (describe): _____	
0	1	2	14. Cries a lot	0	1	2	47. Overconforms to rules	
0	1	2	15. Fidgets	0	1	2	48. Not liked by other pupils	
0	1	2	16. Cruelty, bullying, or meanness to others	0	1	2	49. Has difficulty learning	
0	1	2	17. Daydreams or gets lost in his/her thoughts	0	1	2	50. Too fearful or anxious	
0	1	2	18. Deliberately harms self or attempts suicide	0	1	2	51. Feels dizzy or lightheaded	
0	1	2	19. Demands a lot of attention	0	1	2	52. Feels too guilty	
0	1	2	20. Destroys his/her own things	0	1	2	53. Talks out of turn	
0	1	2	21. Destroys property belonging to others	0	1	2	54. Overtired without good reason	
0	1	2	22. Difficulty following directions	0	1	2	55. Overweight	
0	1	2	23. Disobedient to authority	0	1	2	56. Physical problems without known medical cause:	
0	1	2	24. Disturbs other pupils	0	1	2	a. Aches or pains (not stomach or headaches)	
0	1	2	25. Doesn't get along with other pupils	0	1	2	b. Headaches	
0	1	2	26. Feels guilty after misbehaving	0	1	2	c. Nausea, feels sick	
0	1	2	27. Easily jealous	0	1	2	d. Eye problems (not if corrected by glasses) (describe): _____	
0	1	2	28. Breaks school rules	0	1	2	e. Rashes or other skin problems	
0	1	2	29. Fears certain animals, situations, or places, other than school (describe): _____	0	1	2	f. Stomachaches	
0	1	2	30. Fears going to school	0	1	2	g. Vomiting, throwing up	
0	1	2	31. Fears he/she might think or do something bad	0	1	2	h. Other (describe): _____	
0	1	2	32. Feels he/she has to be perfect				_____	
0	1	2	33. Feels or complains that no one loves him/her				_____	

Please print. Be sure to answer all items.

0 = Not True (as far as you know) 1 = Somewhat or Sometimes True 2 = Very True or Often True

0	1	2	57. Physically attacks people	0	1	2	84. Strange behavior (describe): _____
0	1	2	58. Picks nose, skin, or other parts of body (describe): _____	0	1	2	85. Strange ideas (describe): _____
0	1	2	59. Sleeps in class	0	1	2	86. Stubborn, sullen, or irritable
0	1	2	60. Apathetic or unmotivated	0	1	2	87. Sudden changes in mood or feelings
0	1	2	61. Poor school work	0	1	2	88. Sulks a lot
0	1	2	62. Poorly coordinated or clumsy	0	1	2	89. Suspicious
0	1	2	63. Prefers being with older children or youths	0	1	2	90. Swearing or obscene language
0	1	2	64. Prefers being with younger children	0	1	2	91. Talks about killing
0	1	2	65. Refuses to talk	0	1	2	92. Underachieving, not working up to potential
0	1	2	66. Repeats certain acts over and over; compulsions (describe): _____	0	1	2	Talks too much
0	1	2	67. Disrupts class discipline	0	1	2	94. Cries a lot
0	1	2	68. Screams a lot	0	1	2	95. Frequent tantrums or hot temper
0	1	2	69. Secretive, keeps things to self	0	1	2	Seems preoccupied with sex
0	1	2	70. Sees things that aren't there (describe): _____	0	1	2	Threatens
0	1	2	71. Self-conscious or easily embarrassed	0	1	2	98. Tardy to school or class
0	1	2	72. Messy work	0	1	2	99. Smokes, chews, or sniffs tobacco
0	1	2	73. Behaves irresponsibly (describe): _____	0	1	2	100. Fails to carry out assigned tasks
0	1	2	74. Showing off or clowning	0	1	2	101. Truancy or unexplained absence
0	1	2	75. Too shy or timid	0	1	2	102. Underactive, slow moving, or lacks energy
0	1	2	76. Explosive or unpredictable behavior	0	1	2	103. Unhappy, sad, or depressed
0	1	2	77. Demands must be met immediately or easily frustrated	0	1	2	104. Unusually loud
0	1	2	78. Inattentive or easily distracted	0	1	2	105. Uses drugs for nonmedical purposes (don't include tobacco) (describe): _____
0	1	2	79. Specific problem (describe): _____	0	1	2	106. Overly anxious to please
0	1	2	80. Stares blankly	0	1	2	107. Dislikes school
0	1	2	81. Feels humiliated when criticized	0	1	2	108. Is afraid of making mistakes
0	1	2	82. Steals	0	1	2	109. Whining
0	1	2	83. Stores up too many things he/she doesn't need (describe): _____	0	1	2	110. Unclean personal appearance
				0	1	2	111. Withdrawn, doesn't get involved with others
				0	1	2	112. Worries
				0	1	2	113. Please write in any problems the pupil has that were not listed above:
				0	1	2	_____
				0	1	2	_____
				0	1	2	_____

Anger Management Pre/Post-Assessment Test

Youth Version

1. **Dealing with Someone Else’s Anger:** Do you try to understand other people’s angry feelings?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. **Negotiating:** Do you arrive at a plan that satisfies both you and others who have taken different positions?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. **Using Self-Control:** Do you control your temper so that things do not get out of hand?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. **Standing Up for Your Rights:** Do you assert your rights by letting people know where you stand on issues?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. **Responding to Teasing:** Do you deal with being teased by others in ways that allow you to remain in control of yourself?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. **Avoiding Trouble with Others:** Do youth stay out of situations that might get you into trouble?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. **Keeping Out of Fights:** Do you figure out ways other than fighting to handle difficult situations?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. **Making a Complaint:** Do you tell others when they are responsible for creating a particular problem for you and then attempt to find a solution for the problem?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>almost never</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>almost always</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Chillax!

Student Workbook

Based on the Graphic Novel, *Chillax! How Ernie Learns to Chill Out, Relax and Take Charge of His Anger* by Marcella Marino Carver

By Dianna Marie Myers
California State University, San Marcos

SWIFT B

S Sing a song in your head.

W Walk away.

I Imagine yourself laughing.

F Fake a smile. It's like winter for your brain.

T Take cover! Let people know you need a minute to
calm down and think.

B Breathe.

Roles:

Discussion Leader (Facilitator)

Time Keeper

Summarizer

Questioner

Literary Reactor

Connector

Skill Master

Discussion Leader (Facilitator): This is the role of your facilitator.

- Leads the discussion and keeps it going.
- Makes sure everyone has a chance to share.

Time Keeper

- Keeps track of time during the meeting.
- Reminds and enforces Boss Leader Reading Group (BLRG)'s norms.

Summarizer

- Summarizes the story and previous discussion.

Questioner

- Leads discussion of the reading with questions:
 - What questions do we have before we read?
 - What did we notice or wondered about during the reading?
 - What questions do we have after reading this?

Literary Reactor

- As you read, pay attention to what you think or feel about the events in this story.

Connector

- Connects how the characters or events relate to what we see or experience in our lives.
 - Can we relate to one of the characters and how they're feeling? Which character? What feeling?

- Have we ever had an experience similar to what was described?
- Is there a person that one of the character reminds us in this story?
- How can we use what we've read to see this character differently?

Skill Master

- Leads activity and modeling new skill with facilitator.

Lesson 1: What Makes Me Angry & How to Chillax

What makes me angry?

Think about what makes you angry. Everyone has a “trigger”. Take a look at the list Ernie made of things that make him angry. Do you have similar “triggers” as Ernie or are there other things? List them here:



What Makes You Angry?

I get angry because ...

What's in Your Backpack?

Mrs. Spiagga explained to Ernie how when he has an eruption of anger, it is usually due to having a “full backpack”.

So what's in your “backpack”?

List emotional things or events that was in Ernie's backpack that weighed him down.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Skill Practice: Filling the Emotional Backpack

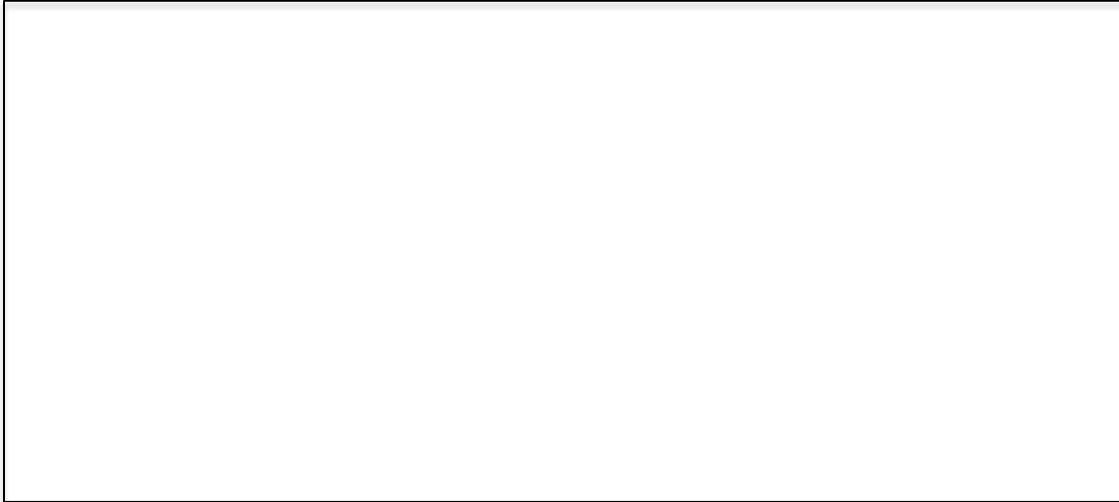
1. Choose a rock that has written on it something that could go into the “emotional backpack” (e.g. Got a bad grade on a test).
2. Place that rock in the backpack.
3. Keep choosing rocks until the backpack is full.
4. Taking turns, try to see if you can put the backpack on. How many rocks need to come out so you can wear the backpack?

When I get angry this is what happens to my body?

Place a ✓ or X in every box that describes what happens to your body.

- My eyebrows go down.
- My face and ears get red hot.
- My jaw gets tight and my teeth clench.
- My breathing gets quick and shallow.
- My heart races.
- My fist squeezes shut.
- My stomach may be empty or I might be tired.
- I sweat.
- My muscles get tense.

If you noticed other things that happen to your body when you're angry, write them here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their observations about physical reactions to anger.

Skill Practice: S_IF_ _

Sing a song.

Imagine yourself laughing.

Fake a smile (it's winter on your brain).

Sing a Song.

Take a moment to think of a song that makes you feel better when you hear it. It might be a song that you heard when you were younger or a song that makes you smile. It might be an inspirational song or a song in another language. Choose your song.

1. Go find a private space and sing the song.
2. Return to the circle.

Imagine yourself laughing.

1. Close your eyes.
2. See your face in your mind.
3. Watch your face smile, then laughing.
4. Open your eyes.
5. Check how you're feeling.

Fake a smile (it's winter on your brain).

1. Close your eyes and smile.
2. Now open your eyes and keep smiling.
3. Turn to someone and smile.

Challenge 1: During the week, notice how your body reacts when you feel angry? Try one of the Chillax! Skills

What triggered my anger?

What happened to my body when I got angry?

What SWIFT B skill did I try?

What was the result (how did you feel afterwards)?

Lesson 2: Anger and the Brain



The Prehistoric Brain

Mrs. Spiagga explained to Ernie that there's a part of the brain that remains from prehistoric times. This old brain knows how to survive either by fight or flight. The angry brain can't think and shuts down.

Keeping the Brain Switch "ON"

You've learned three ways from SWIFT B to keep the brain switch on when you're angry. Now you will learn two more ways to keep control of the brain and communicate what you need.

Skill Practice: _W_ _T B

Walk away.

Take Cover! Let people know you need a minute to calm down and think.

Breathe.

Walk away.

Sometimes, it's better to walk away from a situation rather than respond with anger. However, it's important to communicate with others your need in a respectful and controlled manner.

On the playground. Simple. Just walk away from the situation. Get a drink of water and find another activity to do to calm the angry brain.

At home. If you're angry at home and there's an adult present, simply say,

“I need a moment to calm down” or “I would like to have some quiet time and then I can talk/do/go ...”

Find a safe place at home to go where you can have quiet time. If you leave, however, make sure a responsible adult knows where you are, so you can be safe.

In the classroom. This can get tricky, as you cannot simply run out of a classroom. However, there are ways to speak to your teacher respectfully to let them know that you need a moment to “walk it off”. This doesn't mean you may walk to another classroom, down the hallways or to the office. You can walk around your classroom entrance. The point is to have the brain NOT shut down. You may use the following script to help you speak to your teacher:

“Mr. or Ms. _____, I’m feeling upset and I need two minutes to walk around the door. When I return I can complete any work that I missed.”

You might also have a preplanned signal between you and your teacher to use when you feel angry. If you're too angry to speak, use the signal.

Practice

Turn to a partner and one person plays the teacher and the other is the student. Practice the script. When you're finished, switch roles.

Take Cover! Let people know you need a minute to calm down and think.

Everyone needs space when they're angry. Your classroom might have a "cool down" space that you can go to when you're angry. You might feel working near the door, near the window quietly or alone might help a bit. Even if there's not a space, your desk might be all the space you need. Find where is the place in a classroom where you can go to "take cover".

1. Find a space at home where you can "take cover".
2. Create a small sign or "card" that says you need to "take a break and think".
3. Have a conversation with your teacher and/or family about having a space for thinking.

Breathing.

There are several strategies to practice breathing. You will learn a few but there are others out there as well.

There are apps for your iPhone or Android that can be downloaded for free including:

- Balloon (breathing game)
- Kite (breathing game)
- Calm
- Headspace
- Breathe

On the next page, you will find three breathing practices you can do anytime.



Breathing Practice

Calm – Down Breathing

1. Slowly inhale for five seconds.
2. Hold your breath for five seconds.
3. Exhale for five seconds.
4. Repeat this pattern until your body feels less angry.

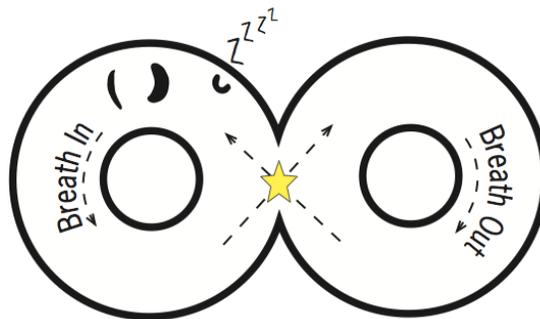
Deep Breathing Practice

1. Begin by finding a quiet place to practice.
2. Breathe in slowly and imagine a word or place that is calming.
3. Pause for three counts.
4. Breathe out slowly while imagining that calm word or place.
5. Rest for three counts.
6. Repeat this pattern for 10-15 minutes

Lazy 8 Breathing

Lazy 8 Breathing

1. Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.
2. As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.
3. Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.*



**Feel free to keep this page at your desk when you need to calm down*

Challenge 2: This week, have a conversation with your parent/guardian and your teacher.

Discuss with your parent/guardian where you can go when you need to walk away? Agree on a plan. Practice the script with your parent/guardian.

Talk to your teacher(s). Discuss what your options are when you need to walk away. Practice the script with your teacher(s).

Discuss what signal you both agreed on to use when you need to walk away.

My signal is _____

Practice one of the breathing practices every day. Check off a box each time you practiced!

Lesson 3: Unloading Your Emotional Load

Ernie's Journey:

As we read with Ernie, learning how to cool down the brain so it won't turn off to anger is not easy. If you feel some days are better than others, don't quit and don't feel like you failed. You're learning! Practice takes place one day at a time.

Dr. Spiagga suggested that Ernie does other things to quiet his mind and focus. One suggestion is visualization.

Skill Practice: Visualization

1. Sitting in the circle, turn to the next page with the picture of the park.
2. Breathe in and relax. Only focus on the picture.
3. Listen as the instructions are read to you.
4. Do not talk. Remain quiet until you hear the signal to stop.

Challenge 3: This week, you will use visualization to practice calming the mind and relaxing. You will receive a postcard with a calming picture on it. Keep the postcard with you all

week. Once a day, take the postcard out, find a quiet place and practice the visualization skill.

Complete the Chillax Checklist on the following page.

Visualization



1. Think of this calm scene in the picture.
2. Close your eyes and picture that scene in your mind.
3. Explore that place using all your senses:
 - a. What do you hear?
 - b. What do you smell?
 - c. What do you see?
 - d. What do you feel?
4. Begin to notice how your body feels:

- a. Are you relaxed?
 - b. Are you quiet?
 - c. Are you calm?
5. Continue to stay in the place until you are completely at ease.

Chillax! Checklist

1. Practice visualization.
2. Exercise.
3. Be grateful daily.
4. Watch funny shows.
5. Get outside for the light.

Practice visualization: Use either the picture in the workbook or another picture of nature or something calming and relaxing (e.g. family pictures, religious or spiritual objects, pictures of nature or animals).

Exercise: Try to get some exercise daily – playing basketball or foursquare, running or joining a running club or any other activity. You may also simply take a walk.

Be grateful daily: Think back at one or five things you can be grateful for *right now*. It could be as simple as “my sister is not being a jerk today.” Or it could be “My mom or dad gave me a hug and it made me feel better.” Write or list those things you are grateful for in your journal. If it is easier for you to draw – do it!

Watch funny shows: Funny shows can be something silly like “Snoopy” or a funny movie like “The Incredibles”. Avoid any shows that display anger, violence or inappropriate views for children (no nudity, swearing, etc.).

Get outside for the light: Do you know it is important to get outside *everyday*? If you’re getting exercise outside, you’ve completed two tasks already! Each day try to practice completing all the tasks on your Chillax! Checklist. For each task you complete, place an “X” in the box (see example below).

Turn your checklist at the end of the week.

Example.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
visualization	X			X	X	X	X
exercise	X	X	X		X	X	X
journal	X		X	X	X	X	X
funny show	X	X	X	X	X	X	

For the week of _____

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
visualization							
exercise							
journal							
funny show							

For the week of _____

Notes: _____

Lesson 4: How to Communicate Better

The best way to control your anger is to know how to communicate what you are feeling in a way that makes you feel powerful. Using “I feel ...” statements puts the focus on taking care of you and expressing how you felt. The other part of the “I” statement is stating what you want or need to the other person. This allows you to be **assertive** and not **aggressive**.

Assertive people: state their opinions or feelings while being respectful of others.

Aggressive people: attack or ignore other people’s opinions or feelings in favor of their own.

“I feel _____ when you _____. I need you to _____.”

The Assertive Stance.

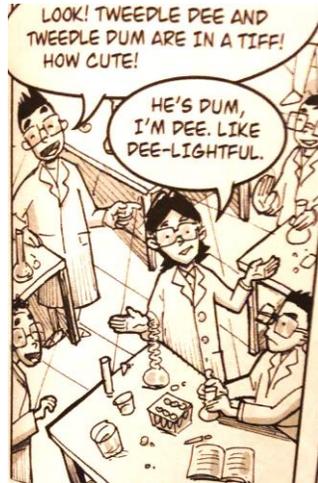
- Powerful and clear voice.
- Good eye contact.
- Standing in a strong position.

Skill Practice: Assertive Communication

The following is a scene from “Chillax!”

1. Partner in three. One person will be Ernie and the other person will be Jack and the other will be Student.
2. Read the original text in your assigned roles.
3. Discuss how could Ernie used the “I” statements to assert himself and not be aggressive.
4. Read the second script with your “I” statement instead using the Assertive Stance.

Rewriting the Script



Script 1. Non-assertive

Student: Look! Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum are in a tiff! How cute!

Jack: He's Dum. I'm Dee. Like Dee-lightful!

Ernie: (angry) GLAD I CAN ENTERTAIN EVERYONE!

Script 2. Assertive

Student: Look! Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum are in a tiff! How cute!

Jack: He's Dum. I'm Dee. Like Dee-lightful!

Ernie: I feel _____ when you _____. I need you guys to _____.

Challenge 4: This week, you're going to practice being assertive.

Find an opportunity to use the "I" statements for something that a minor issue (e.g. a student takes your pencil). Remember to practice this when you're calm and have a cool head so you can be respectful to the other person.

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