

# S4L

## Skills4Life

Social Emotional Skills for Career Studies

## Student Notebook



School  
Mental Health  
Ontario

Santé mentale  
en milieu scolaire  
Ontario



SOCIAL RESEARCH  
AND DEMONSTRATION  
CORPORATION | SOCIÉTÉ  
DE RECHERCHE  
SOCIALE APPLIQUÉE



ONTARIO ENGLISH  
Catholic  
Teachers  
ASSOCIATION

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Notebook 1.1

# I Matter

We encounter groups of people everywhere we go. People may belong to many different types of groups: a family, a social circle, a religious group, a cultural group, a workplace, a school/classroom, a sports team, etc. We are each connected to others in unique ways, and those connections are important to our sense of how we matter in the world.

There are people who rely on you, value you, believe in you, and want you to succeed at school, at work, and in life in general. When you are feeling down and disconnected, it can be helpful to think about groups you are a part of, and remind yourself that you matter to people (and pets too!). Remember that your impact on people and the world isn't always visible, but it's always there!

Look at the list below and check all the boxes that apply to you. Think of it in terms of "I am". There is space to add other groups or communities not on the list.

## I am a(n)... (check all that apply)

Advocate	Faith member	Role Model
Aunt/Uncle	Family member	Sibling
Band member	Fan or Supporter	Student
Change-maker	Friend	Teacher
Child	Grandchild	Teammate
Club member	Helper	Tutor/Mentor
Coach	Leader	
Colleague	Neighbour	
Community member	Nephew/Niece	
Cousin	Online gaming team member	
Employee	Partner	
Employer	Pet owner	

**You matter.**



Notebook 1.2

## Message of Hope

In creating a message to your next year self, think about where you may be and what you may be doing. Then create an encouraging message for yourself.

You may wish to include some of the following:

- » reminders of how you've been able to get through challenging times in the past and the strategies used
- » reminders that sometimes things haven't turned out the way you expected and that it was okay and even led to learning, growth, and other positive outcomes
- » reminders of your strengths, things that you can be proud of, and encouraging words  
acknowledgement of positives, even if you are not what you had hoped for or expected

### Sample – Letter to Your Next Year Self

*Dear next year self,*

*I want to tell you how proud I am of you. You're trying so many new things, which isn't always easy for you. But you are doing it. I know not everything has turned out exactly as you had planned, and that's okay! You **can't** and you **don't** control everything. You're challenging yourself and doing something different. You're outside your comfort zone and that takes courage. Ups and downs are part of the process. Everyone has them, and you will, too. And you're never stuck! You're learning things you didn't know before and you might start to see things differently or become interested in something you hadn't thought of before. If you change direction and it's going to make you happier, that's a GOOD thing. No one has this all figured out, and you don't have to, either. Just take it one step at a time, focus on what's important to you, and stay connected to the people who matter most. Take care of yourself and take some time to do what makes you happy now and then, too. You deserve it. And I know you like to do things yourself, but it's okay to ask for help if you need it.*

*Remember, you are so much more than your marks or job, and you are valuable no matter what career you have. Be kind to yourself. It may not always be easy, but you are doing the best you can and that's enough.*

*Keep going. You can do this, too. I believe in you.*

*Yours truly,*

*Your last year self*



## Notebook 1.2

### **Letter to Your Next Year Self**

Notebook 1.3

## Wrap Up

During this S4L unit and beyond, notice how you are contributing towards promoting a sense of mattering, both for yourself and others. Ask yourself:

For myself and for others:

- » What am I already doing well?
- » What would I like to try?

Add these reflections to your notebook!





Notebook 2.1

# I AM

To help you brainstorm some ideas about your **strengths** (qualities) and **skills** (something you've become good at through learning and practice), use the following I AM box to jot down your ideas.

<p><b>Passionate about...</b></p>	<p><b>Good at...</b></p>
<p><b>I AM</b></p>	
<p><b>Interested in...</b></p>	



Notebook 2.2

# My Strengths & Skills

Fill in this sheet the best you can. And don't forget to ask for help if you need it!

<p>'Hard Skills' (things I can DO like cooking, playing sports, building things, drawing, dancing)...</p>	<p>'Soft Skills' (character traits like bravery, kindness, creativity)...</p>	<p>School subjects I like or am good at...</p>
<p>Roles I am good at (being a good leader or friend, babysitting, other jobs I can do)...</p>	<p>Things I'm thankful or grateful for...</p>	<p>Things I'm hopeful about for the future (dreams, goals)...</p>
<p>On the job responsibilities I think I would do well at (handling money, dealing with customers, getting along with others)...</p>		<p>Other strengths (talking, listening, noticing nature, fishing, taking pictures, practicing my faith, honouring my culture)...</p>



Notebook 2.3

## Notebook Challenge

Here's your challenge:

Seek feedback from two trusted sources, such as teachers, coaches, mentors, peers, Elders, faith leaders, knowledge keepers, knowledge holders, and employers and add what you learn in your notebook.

**Feedback #1**

**Feedback #2**

**Be curious and see if you learn something new about yourself!**



Notebook 2.4

# Reflection

Based on your strengths, skills and interests that you've identified in today's lesson and those you've learned about when receiving your feedback, research and explore careers that align with these and add your results to your notebook.

Notebook 2.5

## Notebook Extension

**How can you use social media to demonstrate your interests, strengths, and skills to potential employers?**

**How does using media in this way contribute to the development of your sense of self and to the way you present yourself to the world [e.g., building a “personal brand”]?**



Notebook 3.1

# Communication and Conflict Resolution

## Big Idea

Effective communication and conflict resolution skills can be learned and can help you to be successful in various contexts (e.g., workplaces).

## Effective Communication Skills:

### 1. Non-verbal communication

Communication doesn't always happen verbally and face-to-face. Body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures can all impact the message we are sending.

### 2. Active listening

Communication is not a one-way activity. For us to effectively communicate with others, we also need to be active listeners.

In order to listen effectively, we need to...

- » pay attention to the speaker
  - » take turns speaking
  - » restate what you heard
  - » don't interrupt
  - » use actions to show understanding and avoid...
- **comparing**
  - **mind reading**

### 3. Using "I statements"

In order to communicate effectively, it's important that we explain our point of view, rather than accusing someone else of something (which makes them feel defensive and makes it difficult for them to really "hear" you). To do this, we can use the format:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_, when \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_. Next time \_\_\_\_\_.

## Conflict Resolution: Using Communication to Solve Problems

When we get into disagreements with others, we might react aggressively or respond passively. How we respond is important to help find solutions for the problem.

Instead, we would get better results by using conflict resolution steps, which suggests cooling off, reacting assertively by expressing our needs and feelings honestly and respectfully, listening to the other person's point of view, and using creative problem-solving to resolve the conflict so that each person is OK with the outcome.



Notebook 3.2

## Wrap Up

Consider the communication skills you have developed so far, both in and outside of school when answering the following questions:

- » What is working well and what needs further work with your communication skills?
- » How will you apply the communication skills you learned today in different scenarios?



Notebook 4.1

# Balanced Thought Journal

We can sometimes think negatively about ourselves, our abilities, and our futures. But that doesn't mean they are true, and this kind of thinking can add to our stress. When you notice unhelpful thoughts happening, challenge them! Try to talk back to them with more balanced thinking. Balanced thinking isn't the same as positive thinking. It's fair and realistic thinking that looks all aspects of a situation (the positive, negative, and neutral), not just one point of view.

## Examples of unbalanced thoughts and ways to talk back to them:

INSTEAD OF... (UNBALANCED THOUGHTS)	I COULD TRY... (BALANCED THOUGHTS)
If I don't get the job I want, my life will be ruined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My happiness in life will come from many things. Work is only one of them.</li> </ul>
If I don't go to college/ university, I'm a failure in life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My worth as a person doesn't depend on what I'm studying, my educational success, or what job I have.</li> </ul>
Grade 11 is when I need to make all the decisions that will impact the rest of my life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions for post-secondary are not permanent. I'm never stuck. Many people change paths.</li> </ul>
I'm never going to get the marks I need to get into the program I want. I'm going to fail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will try my best and focus on the learning rather than the marks. By studying, staying organized, and taking care of myself I put myself in a position to do my best.</li> </ul>
I should be better than I am.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't have to be perfect. No one is. I'm going to learn from my experiences instead of criticizing myself.</li> </ul>
My parent(s)/caregiver(s) expect me to have a certain career. I don't want to disappoint them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'll try my best, but I can't, and I don't control everything. There are other ways I can make my parent(s)/caregivers(s) proud too, like through the person I am, not just what I study or what job I have.</li> </ul>
My sibling/friend had much better grades and was more successful than I'll be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My sibling/friend and I are different people and have had different experiences. It isn't fair for me to compare us.</li> </ul>

## Notebook 4.1 – Balanced Thought Journal

### **Ideas from the group discussion:**

Free space. Make this journal yours!





## Notebook 4.1 – Balanced Thought Journal

**My unhelpful thoughts and ways to talk back to them:**

INSTEAD OF... (UNBALANCED THOUGHTS)	I COULD TRY... (BALANCED THOUGHTS)

**Tips:**

- ▶ Ask yourself: Is there any evidence to support my thought? How likely is it? Is there another way to think about things? Are there other explanations or viewpoints?
- ▶ Consider what you would say to a friend. Most of us would never be friends with someone who spoke to us the way we sometimes speak to ourselves. We deserve compassion and support, too.
- ▶ Try to catch yourself saying you “should” do things (I should do, act, feel better). It usually means we don’t want to do something and often just makes us feel guilty and judge ourselves. Why not get rid of it?
- ▶ Use thought-challenging for all kinds of unhelpful and unbalanced thoughts, not just those about the transition from secondary school!



Notebook 5.1

# Personal Stress Management Plan

Here are some steps to help you manage stress. Feel free to personalize them!

## STEP 1: ANTICIPATE AND GET READY FOR STRESS

### What helps me be at my best, so I am better able to manage challenges?

Example :

- ▶ Staying connected to my circle of support.
- ▶ Prioritizing stress management strategies and using them regularly, such as a healthy sleep routine.

## Notebook 5.1

**STEP 2: MANAGE STRESS EARLY WHEN IT APPEARS****How can I tell I'm starting to get stressed so I can begin using strategies early?**

Example :

- ▶ I feel irritated by things that typically wouldn't bother me.
- ▶ My sleeping and eating habits are off.

**How have I managed stress in the past? Sort the healthy strategies that work for me.**

Strategies I will likely be able to continue using next year:

Example:

- ▶ listening to music

Strategies that might be hard to use next year due to cost, location, etc.:

Example:

- ▶ going to my favourite local park (if I'm moving away)

New strategies I could try:

Example:

- ▶ a walk and talk with a friend—I'll get exercise and we'll stay in touch



## Notebook 5.1

**STEP 3: SEEK SUPPORT WHEN I NEED IT****How would I know what I was feeling was more than the usual stress? How would I know it was time to reach out for support?**

Example:

- ▶ I have felt stressed for a few weeks without any times I feel better.
- ▶ It's affecting my day-to-day life and ability to do the things I need and want to do.

**Where could I go to find resources and supports?**

Example:

- ▶ I could check out [Resources Around Me](http://kidshelpphone.ca) (kidshelpphone.ca)
- ▶ I could use [My Circle of Support Pocketbook](http://smho-smso.ca) (smho-smso.ca.)

**How could I help normalize reaching out for support?**

Example:

- ▶ I could remind myself that a third of students in grades 7-12 saw someone over the past year for a mental health concern—it's common!
- ▶ I could remind myself getting help early is a good thing and can help me feel better sooner.



Notebook 5.2

## Message of Hope Circle Back

Take a few moments and revisit your lesson 1 “**Message of Hope**”.

In light of everything you’ve learned throughout the S4L unit, is there anything you would like to add or modify from your original message?

If so, add your thoughts and reflections here.



Notebook 5.3

## Wrap Up

In the changing world of work, as responsibilities for workers' health and safety shift, what can you do to look after your own physical, mental, and emotional health in the workplace?



<p><b><u>Black Youth Helpline</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 416-285-9944 or toll-free 1-833-294-8650</li> <li>• Multicultural youth helpline serving all youth</li> <li>• Services available in English</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>RiseUP powered by Kids Help Phone</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text <b>RISE</b> to 686868</li> <li>• Available for Black youth across Canada</li> <li>• Services available in English and French</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Good2Talk</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 1-866-925-5454</li> <li>• Text: <b>GOOD2TALKON</b> to 686868</li> <li>• Available to post-secondary students in Ontario</li> <li>• Services available in English, French, and Mandarin</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Kids Help Phone</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 1-800-668-6868</li> <li>• Text: <b>CONNECT</b> to 686868</li> <li>• Available to young people across Canada</li> <li>• Services available in English and French (additional languages also offered)</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 1-855-242-3310</li> <li>• Available to all Indigenous people across Canada</li> <li>• Services available in English and French</li> <li>• Support in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut varies from week to week, so you may need to call to request services in those languages</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>LGBT Youth Line</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 1-800-268-9688</li> <li>• Text: 647-694-4275</li> <li>• Chat also available</li> <li>• 2S/LGBTQIA+ people 29 years and under across Ontario</li> <li>• Services available in English</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Talk Suicide Canada</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 1-833-456-4566</li> <li>• Text: 45645</li> <li>• Support for anyone facing suicide across Canada</li> <li>• Services available in English and French</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Trans Lifeline</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call: 877-330-6366</li> <li>• Peer support phone service run by trans people for trans and questioning peers</li> <li>• Services available in English and Spanish</li> </ul>
<p><b>* Service availability varies, check the website for availability in your time zone</b></p>	

To learn more about mental health supports in your local community, here are two places to start:

- [Find Help - Children's Mental Health Ontario \(cmho.org\)](#)
- [Resources Around Me - Kids Help Phone](#)