

Mental Health Reading Activity for Grades 2-4

Listening to My Body / Escuchando a Mi Cuerpo

This interactive reading activity is designed for students in grades 2-4 and provides educators with opportunities to help students develop social-emotional intelligence and reduce mental health stigma by introducing mental health challenges that children sometimes face.

A link to purchase the book, the book's synopsis, and an activity guide with discussion questions have been provided to help facilitate the activity, create dialogue and teach strategies, tools and skills that help to develop resilience, mindfulness, positive self-talk, self-esteem, confidence-building, acceptance and compassion for oneself and others, as well as teach students how to be a supportive friend and that it's okay to ask for help.

BOOK DETAILS

[*Listening to My Body / Escuchando a Mi Cuerpo*](#), by Gabi Garcia

Available in English and Spanish.

In *Listening to My Body*, kids learn to tune in to themselves, identify their feelings, and recognize the body sensations that go along with them. Many specific coping strategies are shown, including how to reach out for support, and activities throughout the book give readers the opportunity to practice ways to check in and self-regulate.

Emphasis: Social-Emotional Development

Diversity Notes: Mostly shows ethnically ambiguous, able-bodied, male main character

Relationships: Mom, teacher

ACTIVITY + QUESTIONS

Read the Story:

1. Before you begin, introduce that this lesson is about learning to recognize how we are feeling -- in our bodies and our emotions -- and discovering strategies we can use to care for both. Review your classroom's norms to ensure that students feel respected and safe.

2. Model the sensations and feelings being described using your voice, face, and body, to help students learn to recognize cues in themselves and others that can increase both self-awareness and empathy.
3. Opportunities to practice are offered throughout the book. Include as many as are useful, age-appropriate, and manageable in terms of behavior and time available.

Discussion + Activities:

1. Which emotions did the boy in the story describe, and what sensations did he have in his body when he had those feelings?
2. What are some strategies the boy used to learn how to listen to his body?
3. What are some strategies the boy used to take care of his body and help him cope with his feelings?
4. Help students connect with the concepts to be explored by writing/drawing individually, or sharing aloud in pairs, small groups, or whole class, their responses to:
 - What are emotions? What are some examples of emotions we might feel?
 - What are sensations? What are some examples of sensations we might feel?
 - Which sensations do you have with different emotions: sad, excited, scared, etc.? For example, feeling angry might make someone get hot or clench their fists.
5. Consider vocabulary that students might generate or that you might opt to introduce:
 - Feelings: angry, awesome, confused, cranky, curious, excited, frustrated, grumpy, happy, hurt, lonely, nervous, overwhelmed, peaceful, playful, proud, sad, safe, scared, silly, upset
 - Body sensations: ants in my pants, breathless, burning, butterflies in your stomach, calm, cold, cool, fluttery, focused, full of energy, goosebumps, hot, hungry, lump in throat, pounding heart, relaxed, shaky, soft, squirmy, squishy, still, stomach growl, strong, sweaty, tense, thirsty, tickly, tingly, tired, wiggly
 - Strategies: snack, drink, rest, sing, sit quietly alone, go outside, jump around, color or draw, dance, cuddle a pet, be with someone you love, take deep breaths, hug yourself, blow out with horse lips