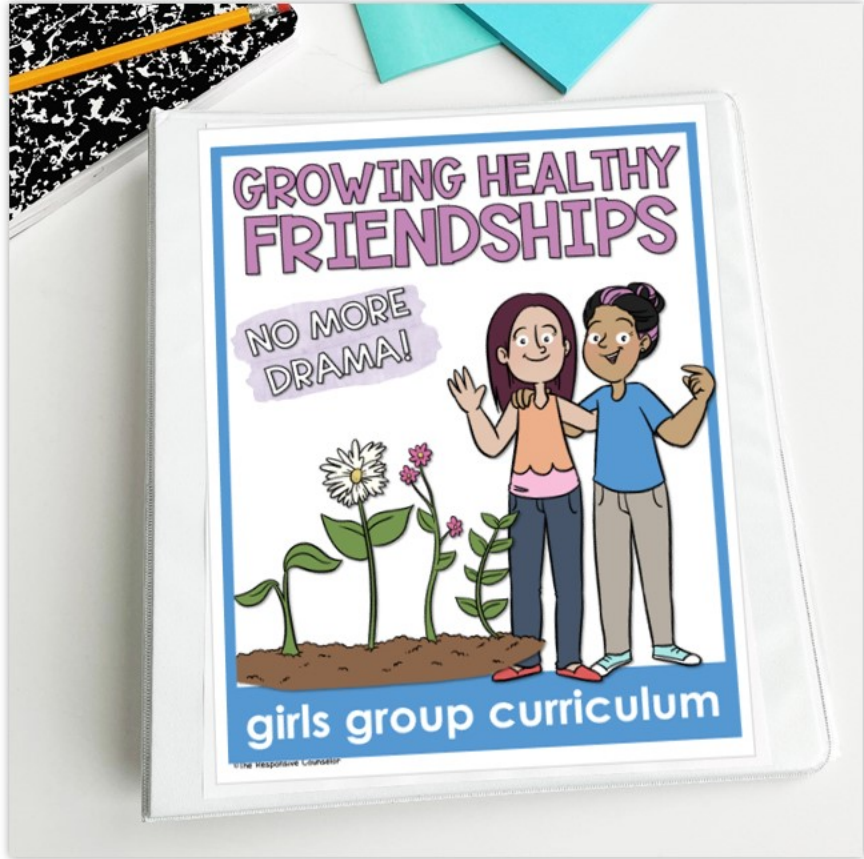


# HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS GROUP



**used by over 6,300  
counselors!**

**friendships, feelings  
and problem-solving**

- For 2<sup>nd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> grade girls
- Comprehensive small group curriculum
- Research-informed

# notes to the counselor

- ▶ This resource is a comprehensive and ready-to-go group. It is also flexible. You can easily pick and choose which sessions to do, re-order them, and/or incorporate books to lengthen the group further.
- ▶ Designed to help students increase knowledge of healthy vs. unhealthy friendship skills.
- ▶ In an MTSS/RTI model, this group is a great tier 2 intervention.





# counselors are saying...



"I used this with my 5th grade girls and loved it! I love the garden and flowers metaphors. This was perfect for friendship skills and so relatable to them."

-Alisha C.

"I use this curriculum with my girls and they respond so well to it. I love that it can be prepped ahead of time so you can grab and go! Highly recommend."

-Larissa R.



# big picture



## ASCA Mindsets + Behaviors

- ▶ Create positive and supportive relationships with other students
- ▶ Demonstrate empathy
- ▶ Demonstrate ethical decision-making and social responsibility

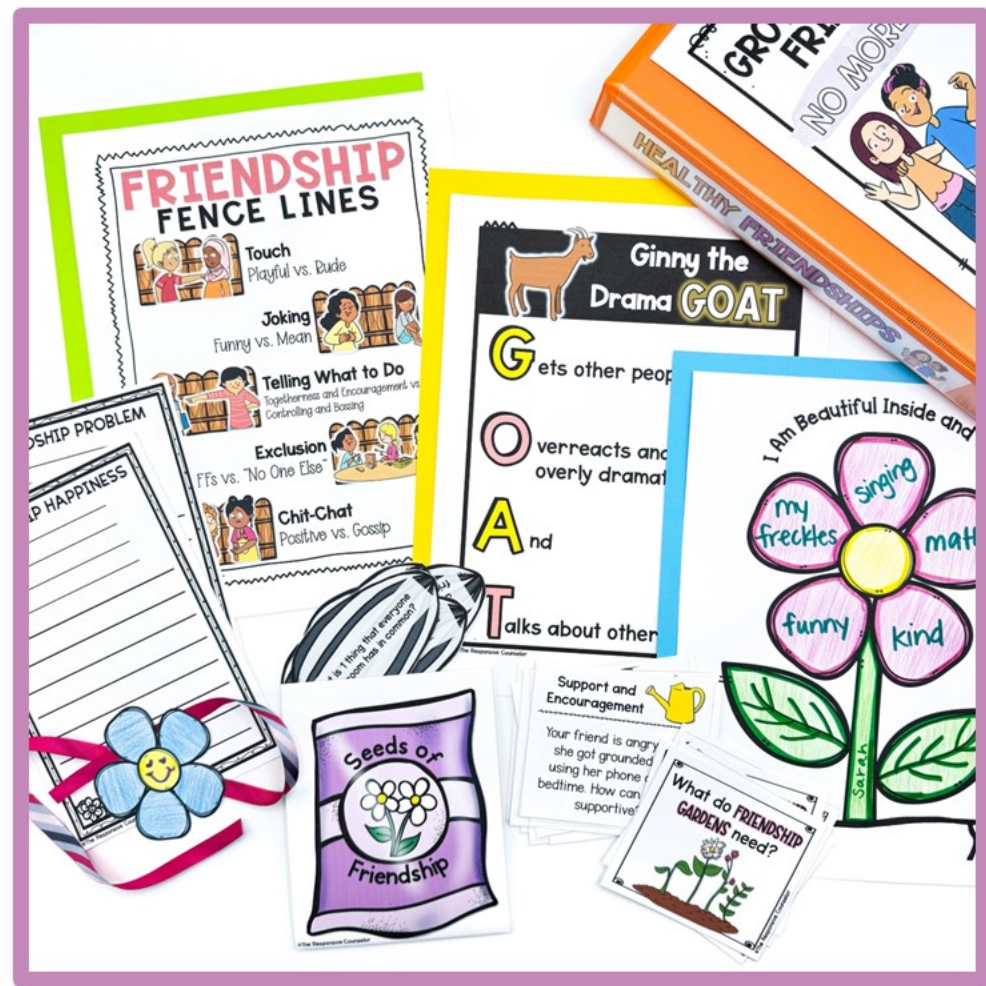
## CASEL Competencies

- ▶ Social-Awareness
- ▶ Relationship Skills



# sessions outline

- ▶ Session 1: How are friendships like gardens?
- ▶ Session 2: Every Plant and Person is Different
- ▶ Session 3: What do friendships need?
- ▶ Session 4: Friendship Fence Lines
- ▶ Session 5: Problem Solving
- ▶ Session 6: Drama G.O.A.T
- ▶ Session 7: Friendship Problems and Friendship Happiness
- ▶ Session 8: How have I grown and bloomed?



# session plans

Each session outline begins with objectives and materials needed.

## SESSION 4: FRIENDSHIP FENCE LINES

**Objective(s):** Identify boundaries ("friendship fence lines") in girl friendships that are frequently broken and discuss how crossing them makes others feel

**Materials:** Focus card, friendship fence lines visual, scout cards, scout recording forms

### Outline:

- Review rules.
- Review previous session: "Last week we talked about things that healthy friendships need. Does anyone have any examples of ways they gave a friend support, encouragement, or respect in the past week?"
- Ask for a volunteer to read the focus card.
- Explain: "Gardens often have fences. They keep predators like deer out and they keep the dirt and fertilizer in. A fence is like a line you should not cross. Sometimes in friendships, people make mistakes and they cross the line with a behavior that makes others feel disrespected. We can call these lines the 'friendship fence lines'. The friendship fence lines divide disrespectful behavior from respectful behavior."
- (Show visual as you explain) "There are five different friendship fence lines:
  - Touching Fence Line – This is what separates playful touching like hair braiding from not-so-playful touching like pulling someone's arm to drag them somewhere.
  - Joking Fence Line – Friends love to joke around with each other and laugh! Sometimes the jokes can be really mean though, and that's when they cross the line.
  - Telling What to Do Fence Line – It's cool to encourage your friends and sometimes for friends to agree to do the same things, but it's *not* cool when they cross this line and try to control what the other person does, like saying "If you're really my friend, you'll let me borrow your new bracelet."

©The Responsive Counselor

### Outline (continued):

- Exclusion Fence Line – It feels special to have best friends that you do things with and have jokes with. This line gets crossed when friends leave other people out; leaving people out of games or conversations, or not inviting people to things.
- Chit-Chat Fence Line – It can be tempting to talk about our friends when they're not around. If it's positive, like "I'm so excited for her that she got the teacher's assistant class job" then it's ok. When it's mean or negative, it's gossip and the line is crossed."
- "The rest of today is going to be about three pretend friends and some of the times they crossed the friendship fence lines."
- Introduce the characters (showing the visual as you do):
- Girls then play a game of "scout":
  - Give each girl a recording sheet.
  - Place a scenario card in front of each girl. If you have more cards than you have girls, you can either choose the ones most applicable to their needs or you can place the other cards in other spots in the room the girls can move to.
  - At your signal, girls read their scenario then record on their sheet 1) what type of friendship fence line was crossed and 2) how the identified girl would feel.
  - At your next signal, girls "scout" to the next card, read, and record.
  - Repeat for as long as time allows or until all girls have responded to all of the cards.
  - Ask the girls which scenarios felt the most like what they are experiencing and discuss all together.
- Closing: "Which friendship fence line do you cross sometimes?" Girls can respond orally if group rapport and trust is well-established, or on exit tickets if it is still developing.

©The Responsive Counselor

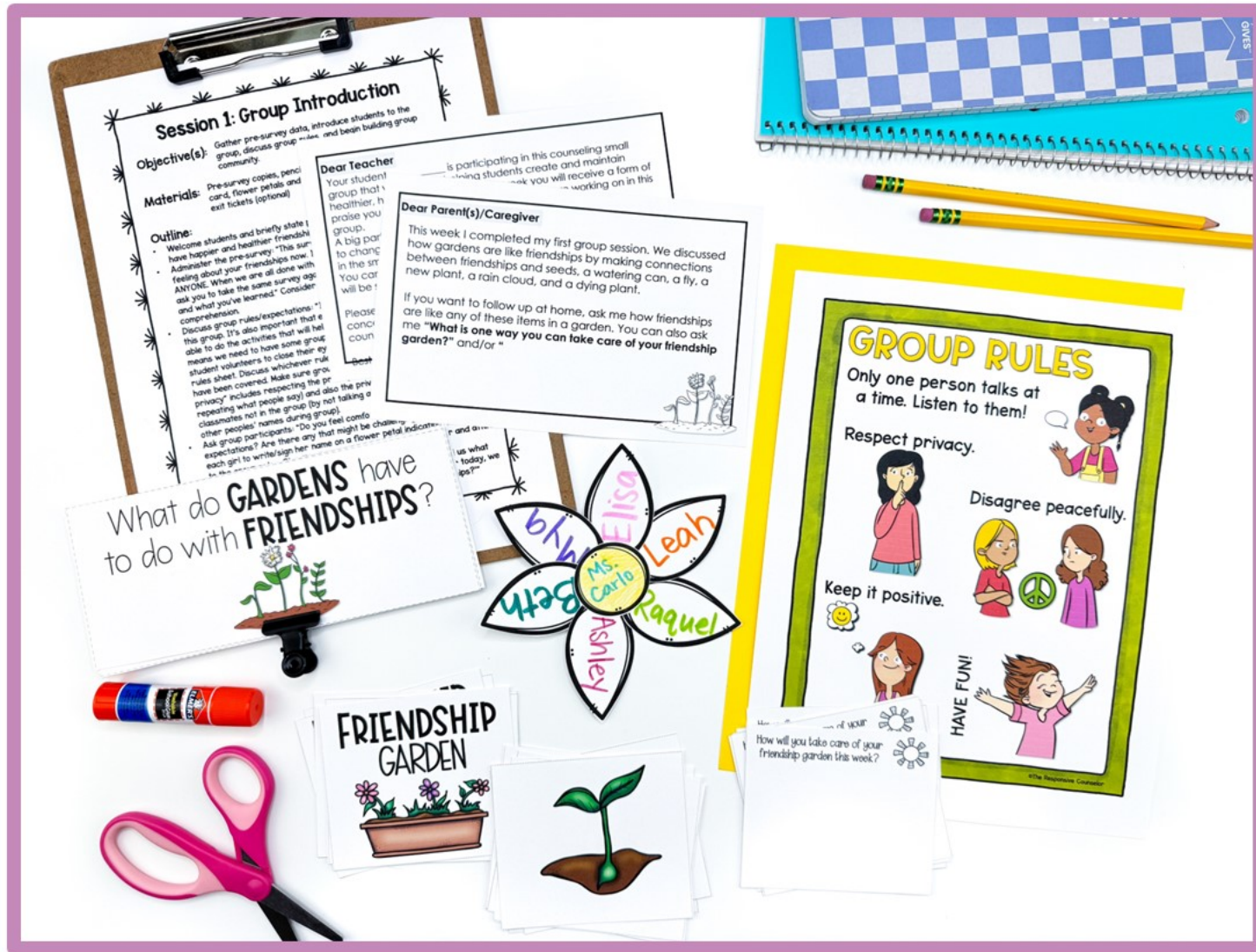
Comprehensive session plans include clear directions and scripting.



# session 1

## Session 1: How are friends like gardens?

Group introduction  
and expectations,  
friendship  
comparison activity



# session 2



## Session 2: Every Plant and Person is Different

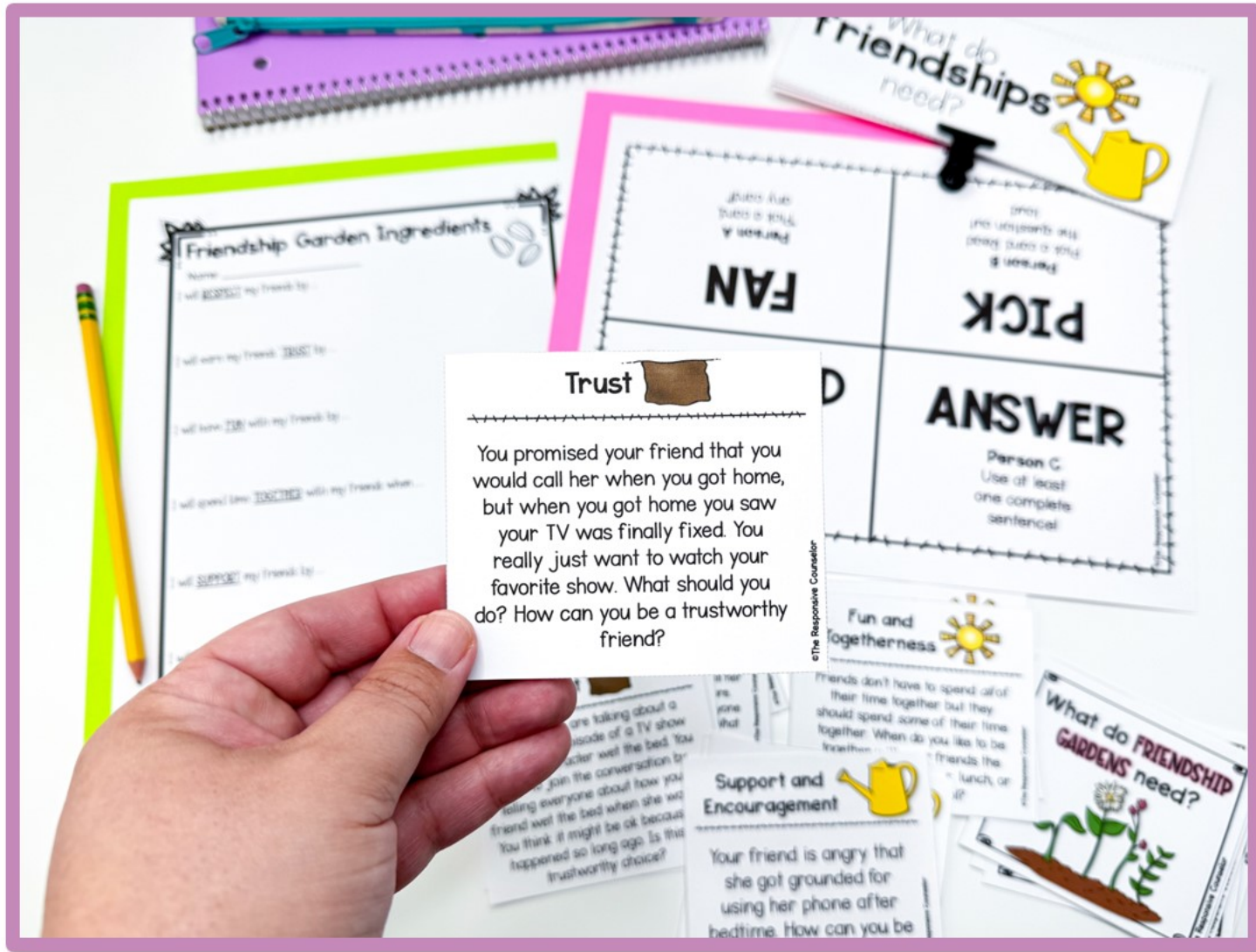
Identifying your  
own unique identity



# session 3

## Session 3: What do friendships need?

Identifying healthy  
friendship  
characteristics



# session 4

## Session 4: Friendship Fence Lines

Physical, verbal, and  
emotional  
boundaries activity





# session 5

## Session 5: Problem Solving

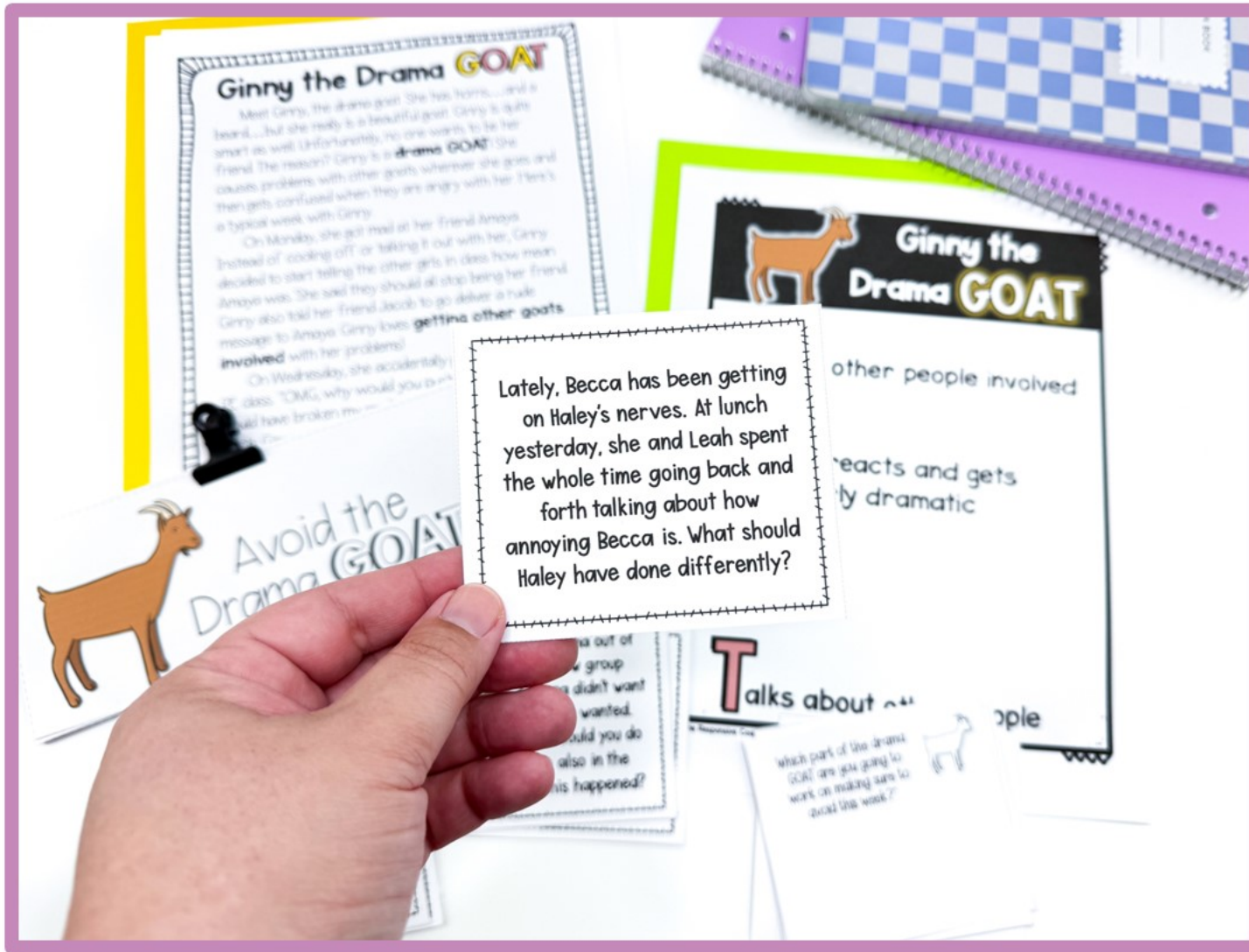
Conflict  
strategies and  
I-message  
statements



# session 6

## Session 6: Drama G.O.A.T

Short story and  
practice scenarios  
regarding friendship  
drama





# session 7

## Session 7: Friendship Problems and Friendship Happiness

Practice and  
application through  
self-created  
scenarios



# session 8



Session 8:  
How have I grown  
and bloomed?

Reflection.  
craftivity and  
group termination



# examples of scenarios + questions

Wording and scenarios written to be relevant and developmentally appropriate for 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders.

Your friend has been grabbing your arm and pulling you a lot lately.



Michelle was absent from school yesterday. When she came back, Madelyn and La'niya kept looking at each other and giggling and talking about everything that happened the day before. When Michelle asked them to tell her about it, they said "it's kind of private between the two of us."

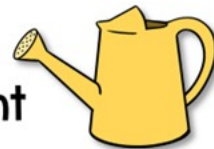
What friendship fence line did Madelyn and La'niya cross?

How do you think Michelle was feeling?



©The Responsive Counselor

Support and Encouragement



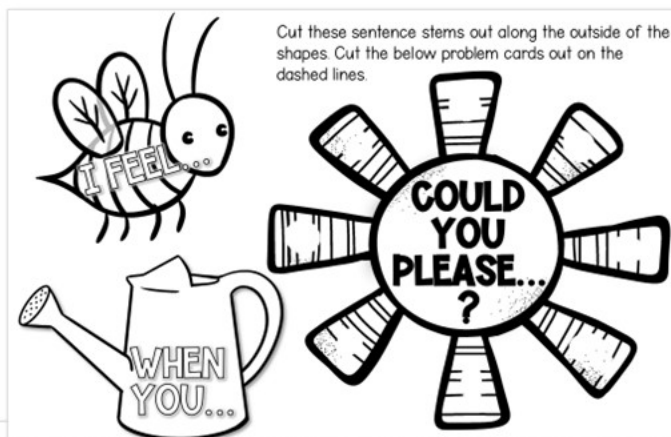
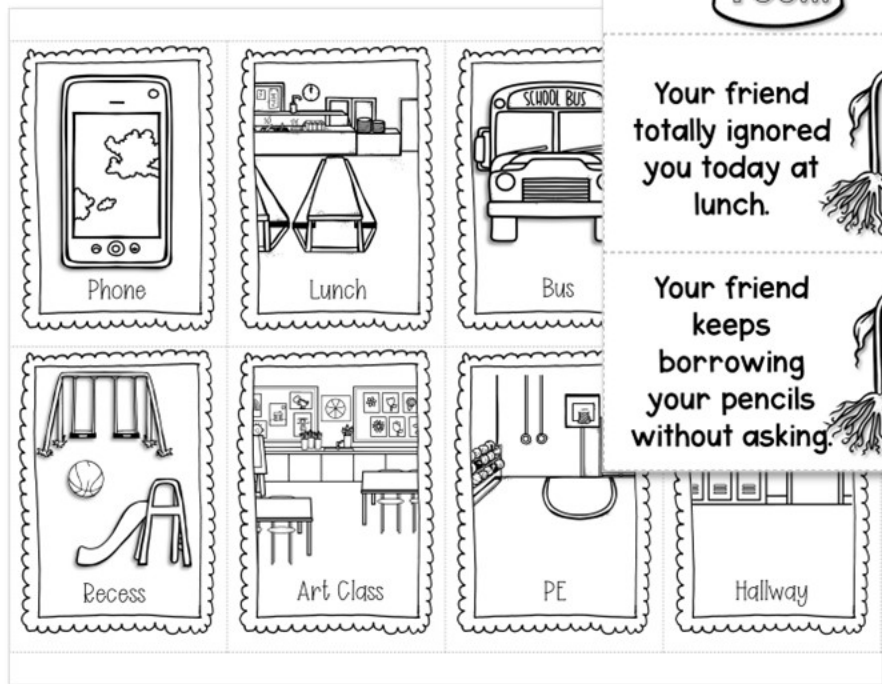
Your friend just got her math test back and got a D on it. How can you support her?

©The Responsive Counselor

Christina worries that no one notices her and that people think she's boring. Instead of stirring up some drama, what could she do to get people to notice her in a good way?

# examples of scenarios + questions

All pages  
also included  
in blackline



Your friend totally ignored you today at lunch.



Your friend called you dumb during class.



Your friend keeps borrowing your pencils without asking.



Your friend made fun of your new hair style then said, "just kidding."



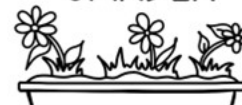
What do you like to do with your friends at recess?

FRIENDSHIP GARDEN



FRIENDSHIP

FRIENDSHIP GARDEN



What is 1 thing you do that might bother your friends?

Give a quality compliment to someone else in the room.

What is 1 reason you think friends are sometimes mean to each other on purpose?

FRIENDSHIP FENCE LINES



**Touch**  
Playful vs. Rude



**Joking**  
Funny vs. Mean



**Telling What to Do**  
Togetherness and Encouragement vs. Controlling and Bossing



**Exclusion**  
BFFs vs. "No One Else"



**Chit-Chat**  
Positive vs. Gossip



# additional materials

Also includes:

- ▶ Parent and caregiver session recap notes
- ▶ Completion certificate
- ▶ Suggested book companions
- ▶ Student pre/post survey
- ▶ Teacher pre/post survey



# counselors are saying...



"Everything is so easy to implement! The girls absolutely loved coming to group every week and they really showed growth and self reflection. I highly recommend this to anyone wanted to help kiddos build better friendship skills."

-Tabbitha B.

"Perfect for a group of girls who were struggling with conflict resolution skills! Very little prep involved. Engaging activities! Thank you!"



-Kristi N.



Hi, I'm Sara! I create resources for elementary students, counselors, and teachers that improve social emotional learning and help students be their best selves. My focus is creating resources that are *effective* (using research-based best practices) and *engaging* (through collaborative learning and relevant scenarios) for all types of learners and populations.

## Education

B.A. from Michigan State University  
Psychology and Anthropology

M.S. from Vanderbilt University  
Community, Research, and Action

M.Ed. From Vanderbilt University  
Human Development Counseling:  
School Counseling & Mental Health

## Experience

I'm a former school counselor from a large southeastern school district with a wonderfully diverse group of students. I created and implemented a data-based comprehensive school counseling program while helping classroom teachers and administrators implement schoolwide SEL and restorative practices. Now, I share my ideas and resources to reach students and help educators across the world!



the **RESPONSIVE**  
**counselor**

Let's Connect:

