



Five Works of Jacqueline Woodson: A Social-Emotional Learning Journey

Self-Management Teaching Guide

Before the Ever After
pp. 114-115

Learning Objectives

These learning objectives align with the CASEL framework and cultivate social-emotional learning skills.

Students will be able to understand how to:

- Manage their emotions
- Identify and use stress management strategies
- Show courage to take initiative

Essential questions

- How do you ask for what you need, even when someone might not understand what you're asking for?
- What do you do when you need to express yourself?

Reflection questions

Before Questions

- How do you know when you are anxious? What do your body, mind, and senses experience when you feel this way?
- What is self-management? Why is it important?
- Do you find it easy to ask for help when you are feeling anxious?

During Questions

- When Darry needs his friends, he passes them a note that says I need “the trail.” What are some ways you tell people you need them?
- Who are the people that let you know everything is going to be okay?
- Where do you go to care for yourself, be with your feelings, and find peace?

After Questions

- How do you feel after reading “The Trail?” What emotions and thoughts are you having?
- How do you and the people you turn to help each other when things are difficult?
- How do you and the people you turn to celebrate when things are good?



Writing prompts

- Imagine you are ZJ. What would you say to Darry to help him feel better about his parents' separation? Write out the conversation you might have with him.
- Who are the people you can count on when you are stressed out? Make a list of people and describe how they can help you when you are stressed.
- The boys have the trail when they need to talk. Where is your place to go when things are difficult? Why do you go there? Who and what are there that help you?

Educator Tips: Going Deeper

- Have students identify a personal goal. Have them write out steps that they would need to accomplish that goal. Have them identify one or more people who can help them accomplish their goal. They should describe in detail how each person can support them.
- Have students research different techniques for reducing stress. Students should choose 2-3 techniques that they would like to try to help them reduce their stress. Have students keep a journal on how the techniques worked and what worked best to help them with stress. For students who are unsure, you might suggest artistic activities like dancing, singing, drawing, or walking in nature.