

# WHOLE CHILD, WHOLE LIFE

10 WAYS TO HELP KIDS  
LIVE, LEARN, & THRIVE



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## Discussion Guide

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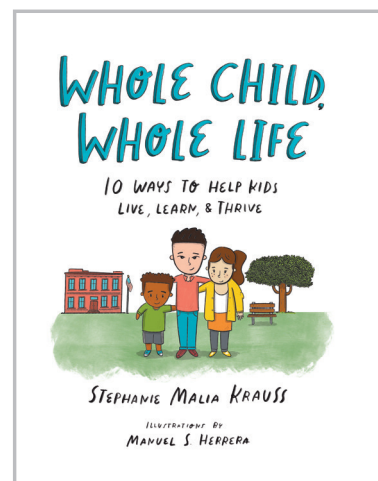
# Welcome

Welcome to your **Whole Child, Whole Life** book discussion guide! This guide is for anyone who is raising or working with young people. By reading Whole Child, Whole Life and using this discussion guide, you will be able to explore these essential questions:

- **How can I help kids build and live lives they love?**
- **What does it take to thrive now and in the future?**

Our kids are growing up amid constant crisis and challenge. In their lifetimes, they have experienced overlapping economic and health disasters, political instability, racial and ethnic violence, serious mental health concerns, and a dangerously changing climate. For them, new world problems are personal, and persistent problems are still present. Many young people struggle to imagine a future and their place in it. Even more worry about their lives today.

Grounded in interdisciplinary research on human development, education, psychology and more, Whole Child, Whole Life unpacks the ways we can get to know who kids are and what they need to thrive and love their lives. This book unpacks 10 integrative “Whole Life” practices that optimize young people’s wholeness and wellbeing across a lifetime. By taking a holistic and humane view of our kids and the world they are growing up in, Whole Child, Whole Life offers timely and timeless tips for how to best prepare and care for kids.



This guide was developed to help you understand and use the information in Whole Child, Whole Life. This book covers a lot of ground and while that makes it a comprehensive resource to read and return to, it can be hard to decide where to start and what to prioritize.

**This guide helps address that, by offering:**

- **Summaries of core themes from each chapter**
- **Personal reflection prompts**
- **Opportunities to apply what you’ve read and discussed**

## Suggested Use

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It is up to you how to use this guide! The next few pages include suggested reading schedules, which can help if you are reading *Whole Child, Whole Life* with others. This guide offers summaries and questions for individual chapters, but you can combine and customize in whatever ways make sense for your group.

As you read and implement these ideas, go to [www.WholeChildWholeLife.com](http://www.WholeChildWholeLife.com) to sign up for regular emails and download free resources. If there is a tool you want that isn't available, submit your request through the website. Also, be sure to experiment with the "try now" sections included throughout the book; let your group know how those work out!

## Special Note

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If you are an adult who works on behalf of kids but doesn't interact with them each day, you can still use this guide. Every day, you make decisions that influence kids' lives, but risk falling out-of-touch with their real-time experiences and needs. This discussion guide can help you stay focused on what matters most—the kids you are working on behalf of.

For the kids,



# Suggested Reading Schedules

2-Months | 5-Months | 10-Months

## 2-Months

Great for those who plan to read the book over the summer.

### MONTH 1

- Preface; Introduction; About the Illustrations (15 min)
- Ch. 1: Demographics & Determinants (16 pages, 30 min)
- Ch. 2: Age & Stage (12 pages, 20 min)
- Ch. 3: Brain & Body (20 pages, 40 min)
- Ch. 4: People & Places (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 5: Strengths & Struggles (16 pages, 30 min)
- The Art and Science of Helping Kids Live, Learn, and Thrive (2 pages, 5 min)
- Ch. 6: Meet Basic Needs (36 pages, 60 min)
- Ch. 7: Prioritize Mental Health (32 pages, 50 min)
- Ch. 8: Invest in Personal Interests (40 pages, 60 min)

### MONTH 2

- Ch. 9: Nurture Healthy Relationships (36 pages, 60 min)
- Ch. 10: Build Community & Belonging (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 11: Embrace Identities & Cultures (24 pages, 40 min)
- Ch. 12: Attend to Past & Present (20 pages, 30 min)
- Ch. 13: Act with 100 Year Mindset (24 pages, 40 min)
- Ch. 14: Be a Force for Good (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 15: Seek Awe & Wonder (12 pages, 20 min)
- Ch. 16: Aim for Wholeness (16 pages, 30 min)

# Suggested Reading Schedules

2-Months | 5-Months | 10-Months

## 5-Months

Great for those who plan to read the book over a semester or season.

### MONTH 1

- Preface; Introduction; About the Illustrations (15 min)
- Ch. 1: Demographics & Determinants (16 pages, 30 min)
- Ch. 2: Age & Stage (12 pages, 20 min)
- Ch. 3: Brain & Body (20 pages, 40 min)
- Ch. 4: People & Places (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 5: Strengths & Struggles (16 pages, 30 min)

### MONTH 2:

- The Art and Science of Helping Kids Live, Learn, and Thrive (2 pages, 5 min)
- Ch. 6: Meet Basic Needs (36 pages, 60 min)
- Ch. 7: Prioritize Mental Health (32 pages, 50 min)
- Ch. 8: Invest in Personal Interests (40 pages, 60 min)

### MONTH 3:

- Ch. 9: Nurture Healthy Relationships (36 pages, 60 min)
- Ch. 10: Build Community & Belonging (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 11: Embrace Identities & Cultures (24 pages, 40 min)

### MONTH 4:

- Ch. 12: Attend to Past & Present (20 pages, 30 min)
- Ch. 13: Act with 100 Year Mindset (24 pages, 40 min)

### MONTH 5:

- Ch. 14: Be a Force for Good (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 15: Seek Awe & Wonder (12 pages, 20 min)
- Ch. 16: Aim for Wholeness (16 pages, 30 min)

# Suggested Reading Schedules

2-Months | 5-Months | 10-Months

## 10-Months

Great for those who plan to read the book over the school or calendar year.

### MONTH 1:

- Front Matter: Preface; Introduction; About the Illustrations (15 min)
- Ch. 1: Demographics & Determinants (16 pages, 30 min)
- Ch. 2: Age & Stage (12 pages, 20 min)
- Ch. 3: Brain & Body (20 pages, 40 min)

### MONTH 2:

- Ch. 4: People & Places (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 5: Strengths & Struggles (16 pages, 30 min)

### MONTH 3:

- The Art and Science of Helping Kids Live, Learn, and Thrive (2 pages, 5 min)
- Ch. 6: Meet Basic Needs (36 pages, 60 min)

### MONTH 4:

- Ch. 7: Prioritize Mental Health (32 pages, 50 min)

### MONTH 5:

- Ch. 8: Invest in Personal Interests (40 pages, 60 min)

### MONTH 6:

- Ch. 9: Nurture Healthy Relationships (36 pages, 60 min)

### MONTH 7:

- Ch. 10: Build Community & Belonging (28 pages, 45 min)

### MONTH 8:

- Ch. 11: Embrace Identities & Cultures (24 pages, 40 min)

### MONTH 9:

- Ch. 12: Attend to Past & Present (20 pages, 30 min)
- Ch. 13: Act with 100 Year Mindset (24 pages, 40 min)

### MONTH 10:

- Ch. 14: Be a Force for Good (28 pages, 45 min)
- Ch. 15: Seek Awe & Wonder (12 pages, 20 min)
- Ch. 16: Aim for Wholeness (16 pages, 30 min)



## Front Matter | Preface and Introduction

*"This world is different from the one most adults grew up in. Kids have to deal with school shootings, a huge mental health crisis, changing weather like snow in Texas, and tons of war. And that's our normal! We need people who understand that. We need people who respect what we're going through. People who listen to kids and take us seriously. We have ideas and dreams, and we deserve to be heard and respected as much as adults."*

—Justice Hi'ilani Krauss, Preface

*"This is a challenging time to be young. Kids are growing up amid pandemics and other health scares, economic crises, extreme weather, divided politics, violence, extremism and more. Global problems are personal and proximate. Fear for the future and worry for the present is palpable. Young people must keep living and learning during many historic firsts at times when we are struggling to cope ourselves."*

—Stephanie Malia Krauss, Introduction

### Discuss

- What are the biggest worries, challenges and fears you see young people facing today? How do you see this impacting their learning and lives?
- What are your biggest worries, challenges, and fears for what's happening in the world right now? How has this changed how you prepare and care for kids?
- As you read this book, what are 1–2 key things you want to better understand about young people and how to support their well-being?
- Who are the specific young people you will be thinking about as you read and reflect on this content? This book applies to any child, from birth through young adulthood.



# Chapter 1 | Demographics and Determinants

## Reflect

*"Profiles are the outlines or silhouettes of kids, based on whatever available, observable, and reportable data we have. They are constructed from different combinations of demographics and determinants, unique to every child." (p. 10)*

*"Demographics are personal characterizations and population-level categories such as race and ethnicity, age and gender. Demographics tell us the types of advantages kids have in school, other systems, and society." (p. 10)*

*"Determinants tell us about a child's home and community life, schools, and the bigger historic and global context they are growing up in. This part of their profile reveals the types of resources and opportunities they have, as well as how safe and stable their lives are." (p. 13)*

*"Kids don't have just one determinant or demographic. It's their full set that gives us a picture of how easy or hard their lives are now and may be in the future. Profiling is largely harmful, but profiles can be helpful. We can better serve and support kids when we are clearheaded about the risks and realities they face. Sometimes young people have cumulative disadvantages and marginalization, which means they are burdened by multiple demographics and determinants that bring disadvantage and vulnerability, including high levels of stress and trauma." (p. 14)*

## Focus

- Profiles provide an initial but limited picture of who a child is based on available data and assumptions. They have power and consequences.
- A profile combines personal demographics and determinants.
- Many children face cumulative disadvantage from multiple marginalizing factors, causing disparities and developmental risks. We can better identify the supports and services they need by having a clear picture of their full range of demographics and determinants.

## Discuss

- How might problematic assumptions shape how we see and treat young people? What steps could you take to build profiles that are fuller, fairer pictures over time?
- Reflect on your own profile. How did key parts impact your upbringing and still affect you now?
- What information or experiences do you need to better understand the profiles of kids in your life? How will you work toward viewing them more fully?

## Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 2 | Age and Stage

### Reflect

*"Individual variation is why charting kids' unique developmental journey is so important. It can be harmful to chart the development of a child who is neurodivergent against the projected journey of someone who isn't, or to expect children who experienced a pandemic to track with previous generations who did not. Developmental journeys, projections, and recommendations must account for the many factors influencing a child's life." (p. 30)*

*"Young people's brains are wired and rewired by environments, experiences, and interactions." (p. 30)*

*"Development is a highly dynamic, fluid process that is shaped, sped up, or slowed down by what's happening around us—from everyday situations and interactions to broader changes in society and the world at large." (p. 31)*

### Focus

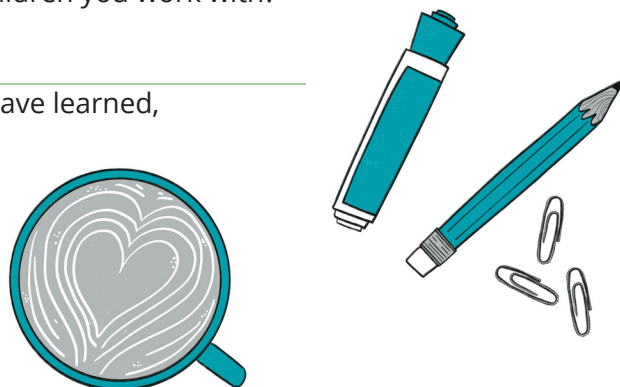
- Dramatic shifts in life, learning and relationships impact development, often speeding it up or slowing it down.
- Development is fluid, dynamic and impacted by what happens around kids.
- Prolonged adversity can prohibit thriving and cause delays. Denying or rejecting children's age/stage jeopardizes their overall wellbeing.
- Kids develop differently based on biology, culture, context and historic trends. We must account for these variances.

### Discuss

- How have you seen kids' development change because of recent historic events and ongoing adversity? What differences do you notice in how they act, learn and behave?
- Why is it so important to recognize and support children's unique developmental stages and ages? What happens when kids are denied opportunities aligned to their life stage (even if they seem age-appropriate)?
- How might you use developmental growth charts or milestones to better understand and nurture the children you work with?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 3 | Brain and Body

### Reflect

*"Health is foundational for kids to live, learn, and thrive. When health is good, everything is easier. Physical health and mental health are both health, and who kids are and how they are doing relates to what's going on in their brains and bodies." (p. 34)*

*"When kids are struggling behaviorally, we have to figure out why they are acting a certain way and make a judgment call—deciding whether the behavior warrants intervention or a consequence. If we want to make sound judgment calls, we must be cross-trained in the basics of physical and mental health." (p. 35)*

*"When kids experience [too much] stress, it becomes harder to learn and self-regulate. It is more difficult to retain information and easier to engage in risky behaviors." (p. 43)*

*"If you work with children—this is [your] responsibility. You are with young people during prime awake time. You might see things their parents and caregivers will not. By educating ourselves on these hazards and being on the lookout for them, we can work together to identify and address health-related causes behind young people's barriers to thriving." (p. 48)*

### Focus

- Physical and mental health are connected and foundational for kids to thrive in life and learning.
- The brain, body, and belly ("BBB") work together as an interconnected system that shapes health, behavior, and potential.
- Key activities support BBB health while common hazards create barriers we must address.

### Discuss

- In what ways are you cross-trained in kids' physical and mental health? What more do you want to learn about the "BBB" connections?
- What essential activities or health hazards seem most critical to understand and monitor right now?
- How do you see stress and adversity impacting the kids you care for and about? Where can you help them focus on strengths, which can counter toxic stress?
- How will you apply your insights from this chapter?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?

## Chapter 4 | People and Places

### Reflect

*"When conditions in one place are crushing, the right people can offer a lifeline that keeps kids afloat until they can get someplace safer. Those people can also drag children down because of how conditions impact them. People have a profound impact on how kids live and whether they thrive." (p. 59)*

*"Through the mapping process, children share a great deal of information about who they are and the interior of their worlds, maybe even more than they understand themselves. Treat these maps with care; like the kids they reflect, they are precious and one of a kind." (p. 61)*

*"To learn and support children, we need to learn about their connections and context, understand the forces impacting their lives and our relationships with them, and reflect on the ways our words and actions can impact them now and later in life." (p. 62)*

### Focus

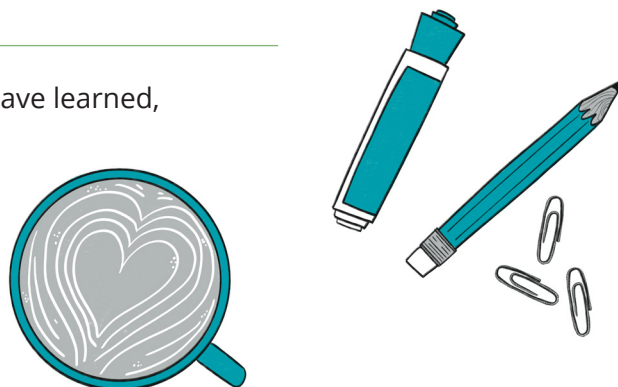
- Who kids interact with and where shapes their development, behaviors, and aspirations.
- Mapping out young people's key connections, relationships, and broader contexts reveals much about their lived realities.
- Public systems serve yet also stigmatize kids - understanding implications and providing support is a vital part of preparing and caring for kids.

### Discuss

- How could you incorporate relational mapping to better understand the kids you work with or raise? What may it reveal or clarify?
- What added responsibilities come with being prominently placed in a child's relational ecosystem? How do you handle those now?
- Which public systems are most present in the lives of young people you care for and about? How equipped do you feel to provide guidance and support related to those systems?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 5 | Strengths and Struggles

### Reflect

*"This deep knowing takes time and talent. It requires getting to know their internal and external worlds—who they are, where they come from, how they're doing, who their people are, and then taking it one step further, paying attention to what makes them come alive." (p. 65)*

*"A beautiful part of working with kids is helping them identify, embrace, and embody what they are good at, understand how they are wired, and explore what brings them purpose and joy. Through this, we help young people become the best version of themselves." (p. 66)*

*"Strengths and struggles color and texture the canvas. Now we see if a kid is captivated by joy, or in trouble. We appreciate kids who who they are and want to be—quirks and all. When that knowledge is reflected through your relationship and the portrait you paint, children will feel known and know they matter. This is one of the most critical ingredients for their well-being and well-becoming." (p. 72)*

### Focus

- Deeply knowing kids requires looking beyond surface profiles to understand the strengths, quirks, and struggles that shape who they are, what they need, and how they experience the world.
- Character traits, key competencies and learning/leadership styles are strengths we can help kids recognize and develop.
- When kids struggle, dig deeper to grasp root causes; then respond with care and concern.

### Discuss

- How well do you feel you know the kids you work with or raise? What else could you do to understand the fullness of who they are?
- How do you presently nurture character, competencies and kids' learning and leadership styles? What more or different could be done?
- What typically causes the kids you care for to struggle? How might you respond in more caring, supportive ways when this happens?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?

## Pages 78-9 | The Art and Science of Helping Kids Live, Learn, and Thrive

*"Caring for children requires science, art, and some magic. It is exhausting and exhilarating. This work is as unpredictable as it is predictable, as frustrating as it is freeing. When you reach that sweet place where connection sizzles, it feels like nothing else matters. When you've tried everything and still can't connect with a kid, it feels like nothing you do matters."*

*This work can be a call, a choice, and a chore. It spans caregiving, teaching, coaching, counseling, mentoring, advising, and more. Through it all, we journey alongside humans who are growing up and into themselves. Getting to play a role in their great creation story is sacred and a privilege.*

*What is good for kids is often good for us. Their needs speak to the deepest parts of ourselves, echoing our own desires for love, care, understanding, patience, connection, novelty, and opportunity. We too want to belong and have community to turn to. We yearn to know where we come from and why we are the way we are. We need ways to heal and have a healthy life. We also seek to serve and see the world in its splendor.*

*The art of this work is doing what is best for kids and having it also be good for us. It is the everyday actions that contribute to our collective well-being and in nurturing relationships, environments, and experiences that enrich everyone in them." (p. 78)*



### Discuss

- What does this section bring up for you? Take your full time together to really unpack this.

## Chapter 6 | Meet Basic Needs

### Reflect

*"It is time to flatten Maslow's pyramid. Children need what he described and more. Accessing one level is not dependent on satisfying another, and each level is necessary to survive and thrive." (p. 81)*

*"Crises can be times when basic needs are most pronounced and at risk. Amazingly, beautifully, the ripping away of one need (e.g., essentials or safety) sometimes leads to an exponential increase of another (e.g., love, belonging, purpose). This offsetting helps children and adults survive and recover." (p. 97)*

*"We all need our basic needs met. It's like oil for a car—necessary fuel to live and grow. Our needs can be depleted and filled, and if we run on empty for too long, we can't run at all." (p. 99)*

### Focus

- Basic needs like food, shelter, medical care are essentials for kids' health, growth and wellbeing. Unmet, their bodies and brains suffer.
- Safety means feeling secure and stable physically and emotionally. Instability and crisis threaten safety, require vigilance and responsiveness.
- Navigating assistance programs is vital but challenging. We must advocate, guide families, understand risks and find creative solutions.

### Discuss

- In what ways are basic needs going unmet for the young people you serve?
- Which public systems or assistance programs are you most and least familiar with? What do you need to learn more about?
- What steps might you take to better meet the basic needs of kids you care for?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 7 | Prioritize Mental Health

### Reflect

*"School counselors tell me they create more student safety contracts each week than they used to in a school year. Teachers insist most high schoolers have diagnosable depression or anxiety. Parents share stories of taking their suicidal teens to emergency rooms and being turned away because there are no available beds or psychiatrists. Everyone I know who cares about kids worries about their mental health."* (p. 104)

*"Young people grieve all kinds of losses: the loss of a person or experience, the loss of a family because of divorce, or the loss of a home because of a move. They might grieve the ending of a school, team, or relationship. By naming the feelings connected to these losses as grief, we normalize what kids are experiencing and help them heal."* (p. 107)

*"We need to empower children with words that attach to the complex and intense feelings they experience. Children need language for their feelings, or they might misinterpret what is happening and think they have a mental illness."* (p. 118)

### Focus

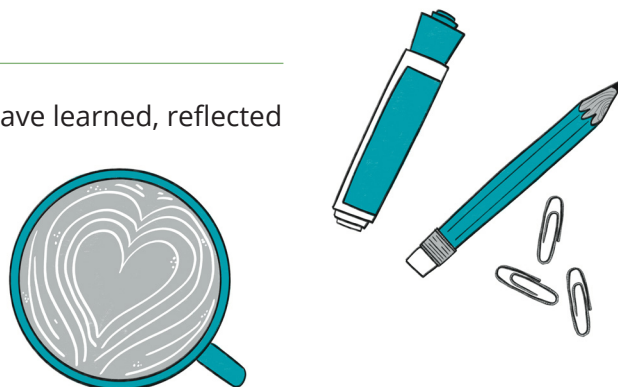
- Young people's mental health issues have reached emergency levels, increasing rapidly in the past decade.
- Given the prevalence of youth mental health concerns and crises, all adults must get trained in mental health first aid.
- Promoting mental wellness requires holistic emotional hygiene habits, modeled and supported by caring adults.

### Discuss

- What signs of mental health challenges do you currently see in the young people you interact with? For assistance, refer back to the table on pages 105-6.
- Which mental health first aid response (ALGEE step) would be most challenging for you? How can you get more prepared?
- Which emotional wound care or mental health hygiene habit seems most relevant and realistic for you to put into practice?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 8 | Invest in Personal Interests

### Reflect

*"For a child to pick up a hobby or pursue a career path, they need to know it exists. It is a gift to introduce and connect a young person to an interest that ends up being a core part of their life journey." (p. 127)*

*"When done well, interests-based programming and practices are also student-centered learning: Kids have voice and choice over what they do; opportunities are personalized; adults are facilitators focused on skill-building and relationships; activities are challenging with real-world relevance; and kids engage in lifelong learning that supports identity development and social emotional growth." (p. 130)*

*"Purpose is an ongoing exploration and process in which kids ask themselves what gives them joy and energy. It's the active exploration of what they are willing to work for, commit time to, and give attention to. Purpose can be passion and it can also be a sense of responsibility—to the world, to a cause, or to family." (p. 131)*

### Focus

- Interests spark joy and purpose but often need exposure—kids will explore, and often enjoy, unknown interests. They just need to be introduced to them.
- Interests provide joy and purpose; kids need exposure to discover new interests, which adults can introduce.
- Tailored, student-centered learning blends interests with relationships and skill-building for whole child approaches that enable young people to explore and enjoy their interests.
- With guidance and resources, interests become passions and lifelong pursuits that bring purpose and wellbeing.

### Discuss

- What barriers currently limit exposure to activities that interest the kids you care for? What are some ways you can help address them?
- How might you advocate at your school or in your community for more student-centered and interest-based learning opportunities?
- Which mentor first introduced you to an interest that became important in your life and learning journey?
- How did that adult support you as you invested in that interest area?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?

## Chapter 9 | Nurture Healthy Relationships

### Reflect

*"The good life is built with good relationships." (Robert Waldinger, p. 137)*

*"There is power in showing up in mundane moments. What might seem boring to you could be life changing for a kid. You might be the only one who has shown up a third or fourth time, the only person to never yell, or the only one to give the child space to be introspective." (p. 138)*

*"Kids need caring adults who provide unconditional love and support along with a network of people who provide resources, connections, and companionship. The quality of relationships and networks have short- and long-term benefits and bolster young people's health and happiness across their lifetimes." (p. 142)*

### Focus

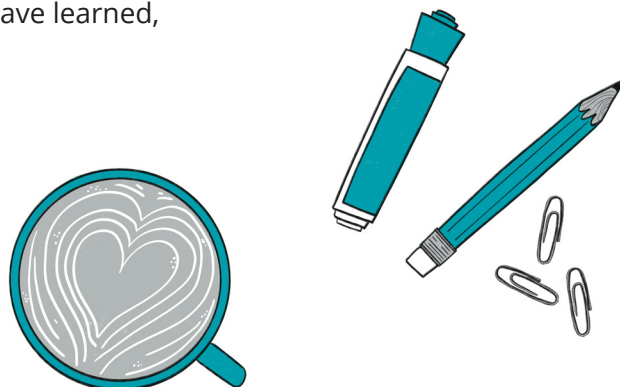
- Caring connections require showing up consistently and being someone kids can count on. You must meet young people where they are.
- Webs of support come from networks of positive relationships across life's domains that are able to be used to provide young people with the full range of supports and services they need.
- Social health and positive relationships powerfully predict health, happiness and longevity.

### Discuss

- When have you shown up "mundanely" in ways that mattered for a kid you care for or about? What impact do you think you had?
- Where do you see gaps in the webs of support for young people in your life? How might those be addressed by you or others?
- Why is social health so foundational, and how can you focus on it more than you are now?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 10 | Build Community and Belonging

### Reflect

*"[W]hen we invite kids to bring their full selves into a community, they must be able to trust us, and we must trust them back. True belonging requires good listening, acceptance, mutual trust, and unconditional support. Belonging also helps young people endure hardship and conflict and explore how they can be a part of a community even when there are disagreements."* (p. 162)

*"Belonging is more than a human need. It is the substance that connects children to each other, to the people around them, to the places where they live and come from, and to something greater than themselves."* (p. 165)

*"We must build and nurture communities that care for one another and show common concern, respect children's humanity, and facilitate close connections without perpetuating an us-versus-them mentality."* (p. 165)

### Focus

- Shared identities and purpose build community; rituals and traditions can cultivate and cement belonging.
- Othering and lack of representation are threats to belonging and overall well-being. They can start to be addressed and mitigated by authentic empathy, compassion, and honest dialogue.
- Rituals and traditions strengthen bonds; empathy and conflict resolution nurture belonging to bridge divides.

### Discuss

- What rituals or traditions do you practice, or could you establish to nurture stronger bonds and belonging?
- Have you witnessed the impacts of othering and lack of representation on young people or personally? What happened?
- How might you work to build a stronger sense of belonging and positive community with and among the kids you care for?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?

## Chapter 11 | Embrace Identities and Cultures

### Reflect

*"Learning steeped in culture is rich, vibrant, empowering and equipping. It can also heal."*  
(p. 170)

*"We all live on the same island in the universe, and we must work together to take care of it. Just like children in Hawaii have their small Pacific islands in common, children everywhere share planet Earth. Together, they will face and fight existential threats and steward a global home that houses all our cultures and communities."* (p. 176)

*"As identity development happens, young people need adults who extend unconditional love and support. This is true regardless of whether you agree with or understand the identity. As young people discover who they are, they look for trustworthy adults to provide guidance, resources, and connection. They need adults who can protect and advocate for them, fighting against unfair treatment, discrimination, and bullying. Our actions and attitudes with young people should always lead with love and never leave kids afraid of or disgusted by who they are or think they might be."* (p. 177)

### Focus

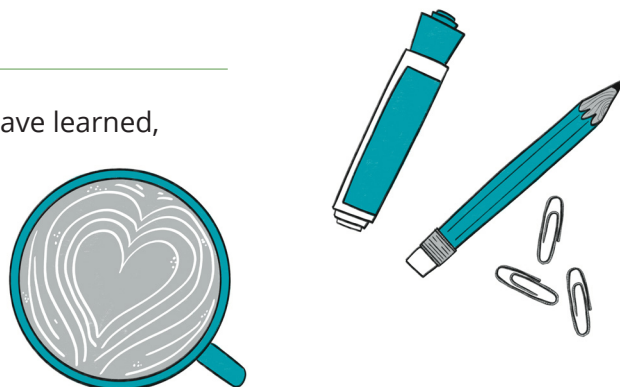
- Cultural connections instill identity and purpose through practices embedding heritage and place.
- Holistic identity development requires safe exploration of group identities and intersectional selves.
- Identity development is a core task of adolescence and a vital part of youth development.

### Discuss

- What "windows and mirrors" can you integrate into your interactions with kids?
- How might you enrich opportunities for identity exploration among young people? Are there places where the kids you care for may be unable to explore their identity, or it may be unsafe? If so, how can you support them?
- Why is an "identity-safe person" approach so important for healthy development? How well do you align with the characteristics of an identity-safe person?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 12 | Attend to the Past and Present

### Reflect

*"Many of us are more prone to reacting to what we see a child do without asking why they are doing it. Knowing the "why" can explain so much. An exploration of root causes and context activates empathy and points us toward effective solutions and supports." (p. 188)*

*"We are our histories. Every cell in the body carries the history of what it has experienced in its lifetime and the history of what has happened to us." (Pam Cantor, 194)*

*"Too often, adults are put in charge of children without sufficient background information on who they are, what they need, or what they're going through." (p. 193)*

*"By taking trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches to our work with children, we can repair or reverse the negative impacts of adversity and reduce allostatic load." (p. 194)*

### Focus:

- Intake conversations with kids and families establish trust while revealing contexts and root causes behind behaviors and other challenges or concerns.
- "Rounding" is a practice that healthcare teams use, which could be extended for use in schools and other youth-serving settings. It starts with the child, coordinates care, considers history, and creates flexible, personalized plans of action.
- Inherited trauma and adversity become embodied; nurturing relationships and experiences can heal.
- Social, family, and environmental histories—including systems—shape development, health, and behaviors.

### Discuss:

- How might you incorporate more holistic question asking into how you get to know the kids you care for?
- What questions could you ask to better understand root causes behind behaviors or challenges?
- When have you witnessed the impacts of trauma or adversity on the kids you care about? How might a "rounding" process help coordinate their care?
- In what ways do you believe family histories or social contexts shaping the development of kids in your life? How about in your own life?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 13 | Act with a 100-Year Mindset

### Reflect

*"To set young people on a path for long and lovable lives we must prioritize their social, emotional, and cognitive health. We must encourage and equip them to imagine many possible futures, helping them acquire the skills and supports to succeed in each one."*  
(p. 205)

*"Knowing this, let's not pressure kids when they're young to choose a single career path or passion to pursue. Instead, let them discover the causes, questions, and careers they want to explore. In a long life, the first credential will probably not be the last, and we should adjust our expectations accordingly."* (p. 204)

*"I believe forecasting will be an imperative 22nd-century [skill]. The future is barreling down on us, and young people feel the pressure and unpredictability of it. By giving them forecasting tools, we can equip them with a lifelong strategy of operating in and making sense of an uncertain future so they can be the authors and actors of their own stories."*  
(p. 209)

### Focus

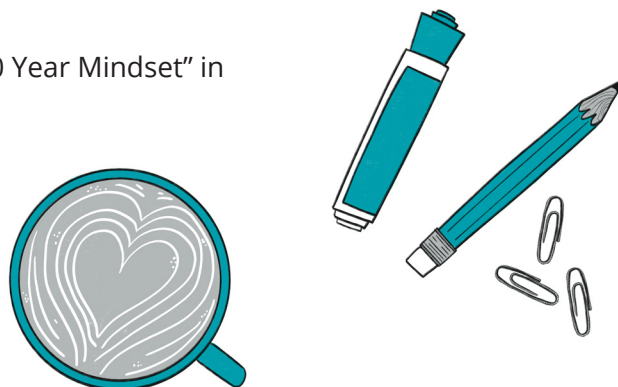
- A "100 Year Mindset" considers how actions today ripple into the future; it weighs options and aims toward an envisioned legacy. We should try to maintain one ourselves and cultivate it with the kids we care for.
- Future forecasting can help kids deal with uncertainty and imagine a future and their role in it.
- Living a 100-year life means the possibility of a very long adulthood, and 60- to 70-year career.

### Discuss

- In what ways do you currently prompt kids to envision their futures and a long life? What are the risks and benefits of doing this?
- How does the possibility of a 100-year life affirm or challenge your views on how we should prepare and care for kids?
- How might school and out-of-school time activities shift to better support the prospect of a 100-year life?
- As an adult, how might you model a "100 Year Mindset" in your own life?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 14 | Be a Force for Good

### Reflect

*"Experiences with violence, oppression, suppression, trauma, tragedy, and disaster poison children's well-being and jeopardize their development." (p. 214)*

*"We must give [children] ways to exercise power and participate in rectifying problems and generating solutions. This type of youth engagement will nurture their well-being and set them on a path for lifetime civic and social engagement." (p. 216)*

*"Social action is ultimately about engaging young people as changemakers and bridge builders, getting to the root causes of big problems, and working to make things better and more just. This work builds young people's sense of identity and purpose, helping them to make meaning of their situations and stories." (p. 220)*

### Focus

- Young people deserve opportunities and skills to identify and solve problems causing them harm. This civic engagement strengthens identities, confidence, and risk-taking.
- Service, advocacy, and activism can be forms of self-care and vehicles for healing. Working collectively gives hope and purpose. To be healthy and healing, service must happen with other whole life practices in place.
- Guidance and guardrails are needed so youth engagement does not diminish well-being. Too much service in the absence of other supports can lead kids to feel hopeless, exhausted, or burned-out.

### Discuss

- How might you create more outlets for young people engage as changemakers around issues affecting them?
- When have you seen or experienced the healing potential of service or youth activism? What made it such a positive and powerful force?
- What guardrails need to be in place for youth engagement efforts to avoid harming young people's health or well-being?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?

## Chapter 15 | Seek Awe and Wonder

### Reflect

*"Spirituality doesn't have to be religious, although religious traditions and practices can provide language, identity, and community. Spirituality is biological and developmental, like our emotions and cognition." (p. 227)*

*"This final whole life practice brings together all the others. It is the integrated and innermost core that weaves a young person's stories into something whole." (p. 232)*

*"Awe and wonder are natural and common states for children. They happen when children's worldview expands through an event or experience. Awe and wonder diminish as we age, in part because they are not prioritized." (p. 233)*

### Focus

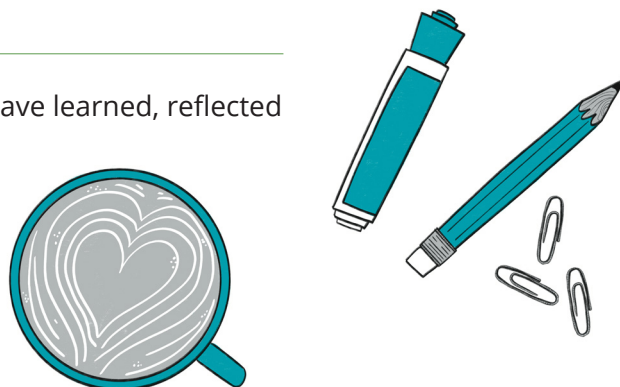
- Natural spirituality is innate, like emotions; religious traditions can nurture it (or harm it). Organized religion is not necessary to support young people's spiritual development. What is most important, is to help kids answer the question: am I a part of something bigger than myself?
- Awe expands worldviews but fades with age when not prioritized. Early spiritual grounding by promoting awe and wonder, may prevent suffering throughout a young person's life.
- The "ABCs" of spiritual development are awe, belief, and compassion.

### Discuss

- In what ways are you already helping kids nurture their natural spirituality, awe and wonder? What more can you be doing, and how might you do this if you are with kids in non-religious settings?
- Why do you think experiences of awe and wonder diminish with age? What might be the benefits of sustaining it over a lifetime and how might you promote your own awe and wonder?
- How are you embodying and modeling the "ABCs" of spiritual development in your own life and supporting it with the kids you care for?

### Decide

- What do you want to do with what you have learned, reflected on, and discussed?



## Chapter 16 | Aim for Wholeness

### Reflect

*"To support young people's thriving, we start by learning who they are and where they're planted. By understanding where young people come from (demographics and determinants), their development (age and stage), health (brain and body), environmental ecosystem (people and places), and signature style (strengths and struggles), we develop a whole child portrait." (p. 239)*

*"As adults caring for children, we are gardeners of human thriving. These incredibly resourceful and resilient young people will harness ancient instincts to survive in as many different environments as the fern. They will adapt and soak up whatever sunshine and sustenance they can find." (p. 239)*

*"May our children be safe and supported; May they experience health and healing; May they feel rooted and connected; May they continuously learn and grow; May their lives be full of joy and purpose. May our children feel whole and be well So they can build lives and futures they love." (p. 244)*

### Focus

- Frequent assessment of thriving helps us understand kids' needs so we can nurture optimal conditions across places and relationships. Consider thriving a state of being, rather than a point of arrival.
- The 10 interconnected whole life practices strengthen the protective factors that enable kids to thrive, even in tough times.
- Our care and cultivation of environments and experiences where kids are fully known and experience the the 10 whole life practices will support their wellbeing and thriving, now and in the future.

### Discuss

- What resonated most for you in this book? What new insights did you gain about what kids need?
- How might you apply a "whole child, whole life" approach with the kids in your life?
- What support do you need to consistently prioritize wholeness and thriving in your personal and professional lives?

### Decide

- Where do you go from here?

# WHOLE CHILD, WHOLE LIFE

