SEL Kernels: Turning Social-Emotional Learning Into Components

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Plan

- Framing
- Background: Science & Practice of SEL
- Innovation in SEL → Kernels
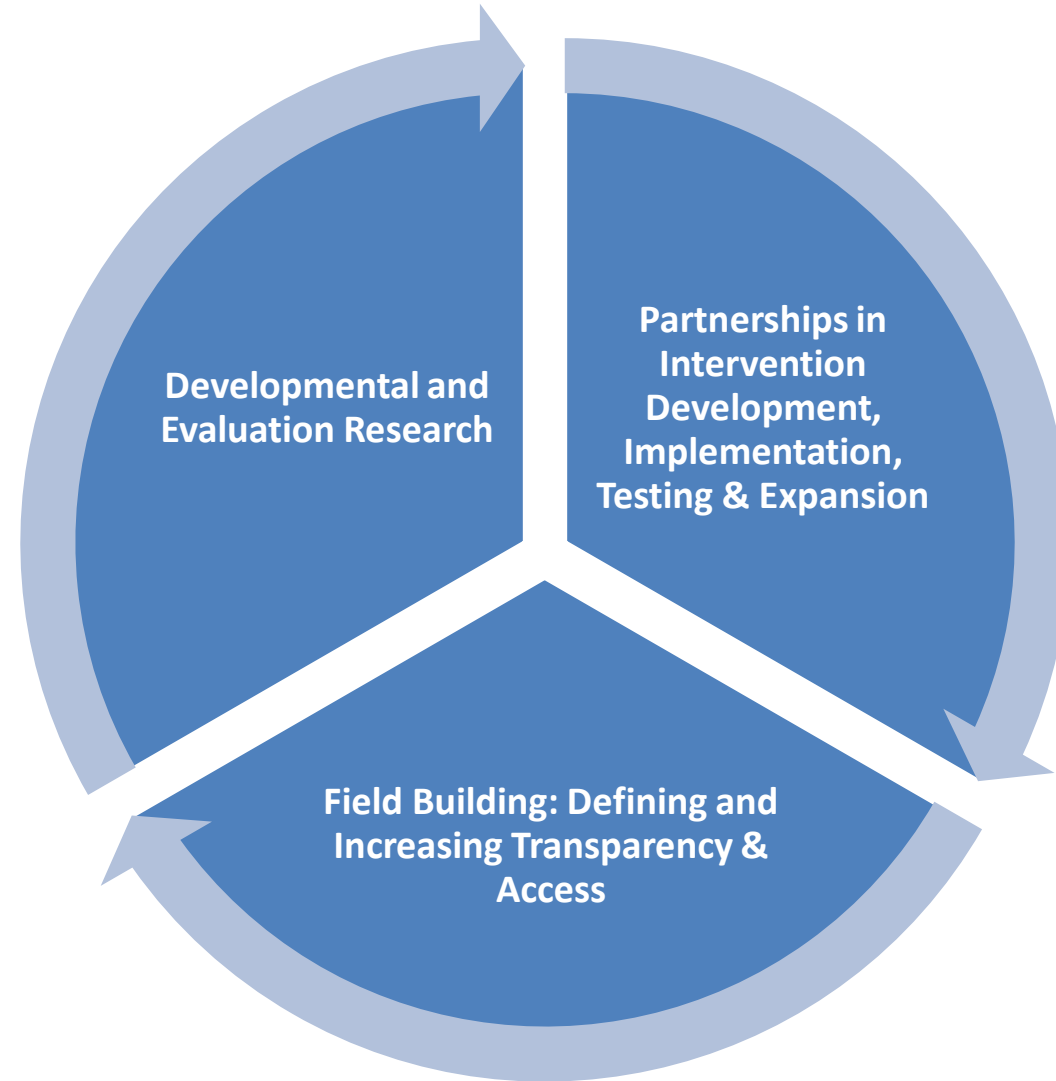 - Projects
  - Implementation
  - Partnerships

FRAMING

Developmental & Prevention Science: Knowledge ←→ Action

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EASEL Lab Areas of Work
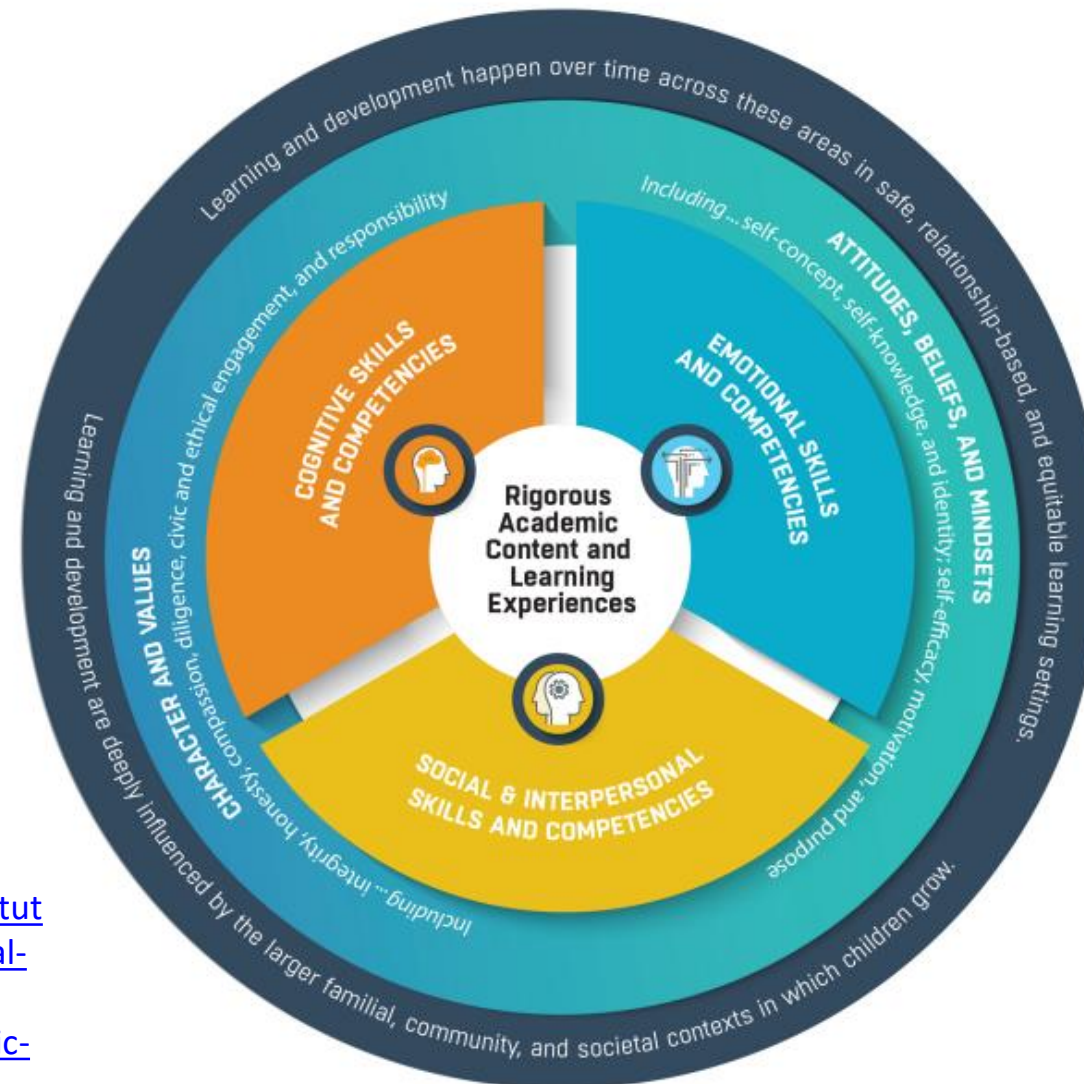
BACKGROUND:
SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF SEL

SEL skills and competencies include…
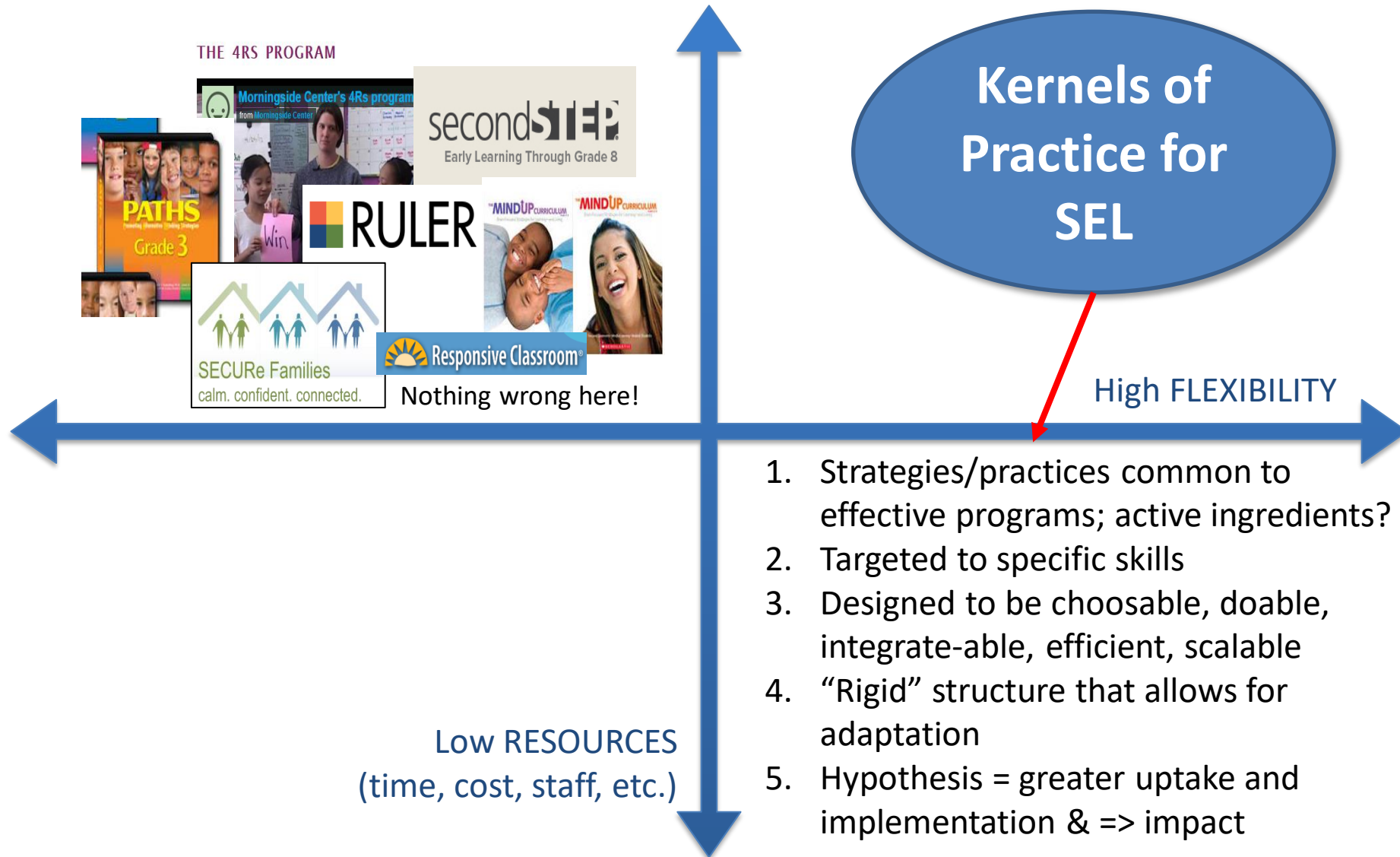
What does SEL work typically look like?

1. Programs: multi-component, complex, largely inflexible
2. They are "effective"
   - multi-program studies, trials of individual programs, meta-analyses
3. Buy-in is limited, resources are constrained → implementation varies

Educators report they want simpler, tailored options, as well as choice and control over what they do in their setting.

INNOVATION IN SEL → KERNELS

Improving SEL Interventions

Kernels of Practice for SEL

High FLEXIBILITY

Low RESOURCES
(time, cost, staff, etc.)

Nothing wrong here!

1. Strategies/practices common to effective programs; active ingredients?
2. Targeted to specific skills
3. Designed to be choosable, doable, integrate-able, efficient, scalable
4. "Rigid" structure that allows for adaptation
5. Hypothesis = greater uptake and implementation & => impact

Example Sequence for One Kernel: BG

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2012-2013   2014-2015   2015-2016   2017-2018   2019+

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SECURe trial in AZ. (K-3)

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SECURe K-3:
- SECURe group higher average attention skills, lower impulsivity, steeper growth in literacy skills across the year, especially among the lowest-achieving students in the sample.
- Over 75% of the teachers reported playing BGs at least 2x week; Over 25% played 4 or more times a week.

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Teachers said they **did not** want to do the lessons. They **did** want to do the routines and games – partly because they were simple and they could choose what, and when to do them.

Example Sequence for One Kernel: BG

- Teachers provided feedback on the cards and games.
- Teachers were able to implement BGs in their classrooms many times a week and found them useful and fun to play.
- Across of the school year, teachers played 4,790 Brain Games.

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BG Redesign w/ HopeLab

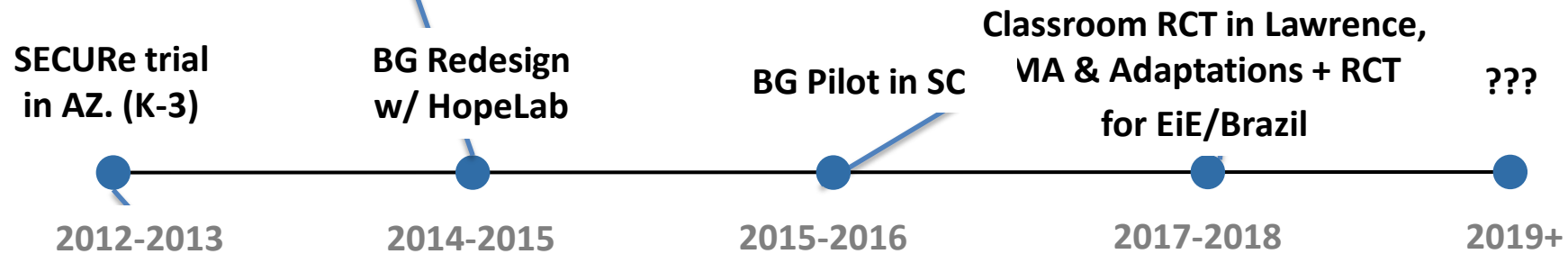**2012-2013**　　**2014-2015**　　**2015-2016**　　**2017-2018**　　**2019+**

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Classroom RCT in Lawrence, MA & Adaptations + RCT for EiE/Brazil

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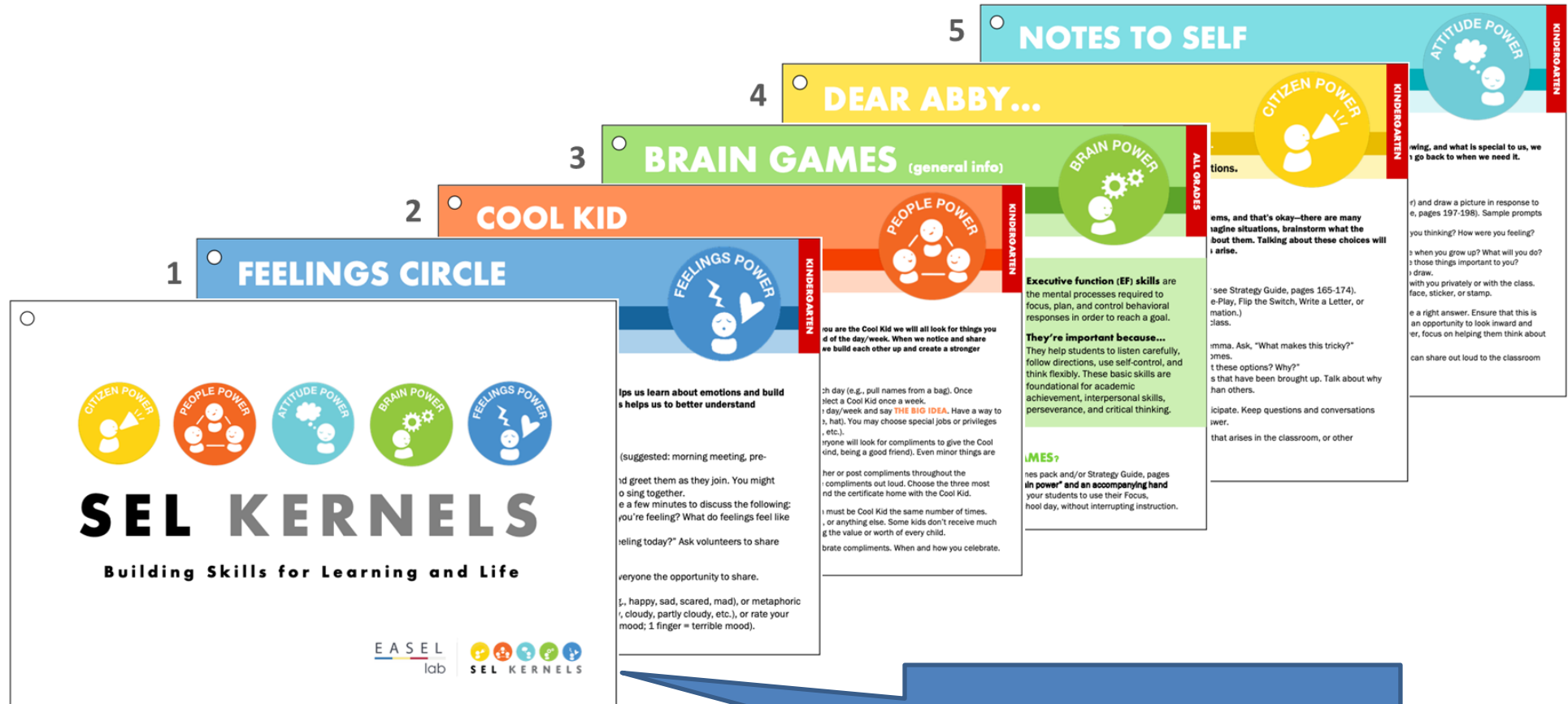- Make decisions about what gets designed

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- Pilot, redesign

- Test…

Kernel Design and Structure

US, Canada, Lebanon, Brazil, Nigeria…

Front

FEELINGS CIRCLE

THIRD GRADE

WHAT IS IT? A group meeting to share feelings.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

WHY DO THIS?

IF WE... talk about feelings...
FEELINGS CIRCLE
THEN WE... can better understand ourselves and others...
SO WE... can regulate and use our emotions to learn and play with others.

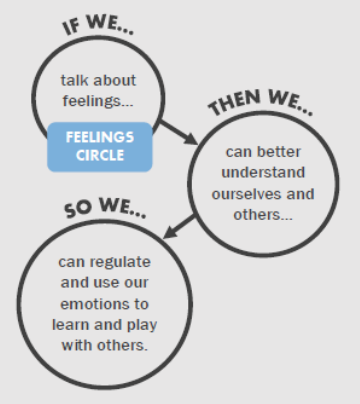**THE BIG IDEA**

Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a mindfulness or visualization activity..
3. Start by saying THE BIG IDEA and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: "What are feelings? How do you know how you're feeling? What does it feel like in your body?"
4. After some discussion, ask, "How are you feeling today?" Ask volunteers to share why.

MUST DO: Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share. Expand feelings vocabulary by introducing more complex feelings words over the year (e.g., trepidation, shame, uncertainty, glee, enamored, elated).

CAN ADAPT: Use emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).

MATERIALS
None required.

Visual and text tags easily identify target grade

The Big Idea provides language you can share with students about why it's important

Simplified theory of change to understand impact of kernel

Must do vs. adaptable components

Back

Post-activity discussion to support metacognition and skill transfer

Tips for success for students with diverse learning needs

Developmental progression with support for adapting and extending the activity throughout the year

FEELINGS POWER

AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:
- What was it like to share your feelings? Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- Can you tell what another person is feeling? How can you tell?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling? Why is it important that you do this?
- What's the difference between [feeling 1] and [feeling 2] (e.g., sad and worried)? Do they feel the same in your body? What are some other words that describe [feeling 1]? How about [feeling 2]?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Allow or encourage responses in home languages.

- For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.

- Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

OVER THE YEAR...

Third grade is a time to explore the causes and consequences of emotions – for example, how feelings impact behavior. A learning objective for the third grade year is to begin to understand how feelings influence our thoughts, words, and actions, as well as those of others.

To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words. Create a feelings word wall and add new words to it throughout the year. Refer to it when you're reading, writing, or solving a problem. This is a way to connect feelings words to other times of the day and build a rich and sophisticated vocabulary. This works best when you use it often throughout the day.

Throughout the year, encourage students to think about and describe how feelings impact behavior. Some ideas for discussion topics and activities:
- Invite students to write about a time that feelings seemed "in control" of their thoughts, words, or actions. What happened to cause this situation? How did it feel? How did you respond?
- Invite students to write or draw a "cause and effect" diagram for different types of feelings. For example, "When I feel proud/shy/silly, it affects me in this way…"
- Invite students to make a drawing or painting in which they associate specific colors with different feelings. Have each student add multiple describing words to each emotion.

EASEL lab | SEL KERNELS

Training & Support

- Simple
  - 2 hours;
  - in person/Zoom
  - Focused on practice & feedback

- Online, web-based support; implementation tracker + advice; additional materials and resources
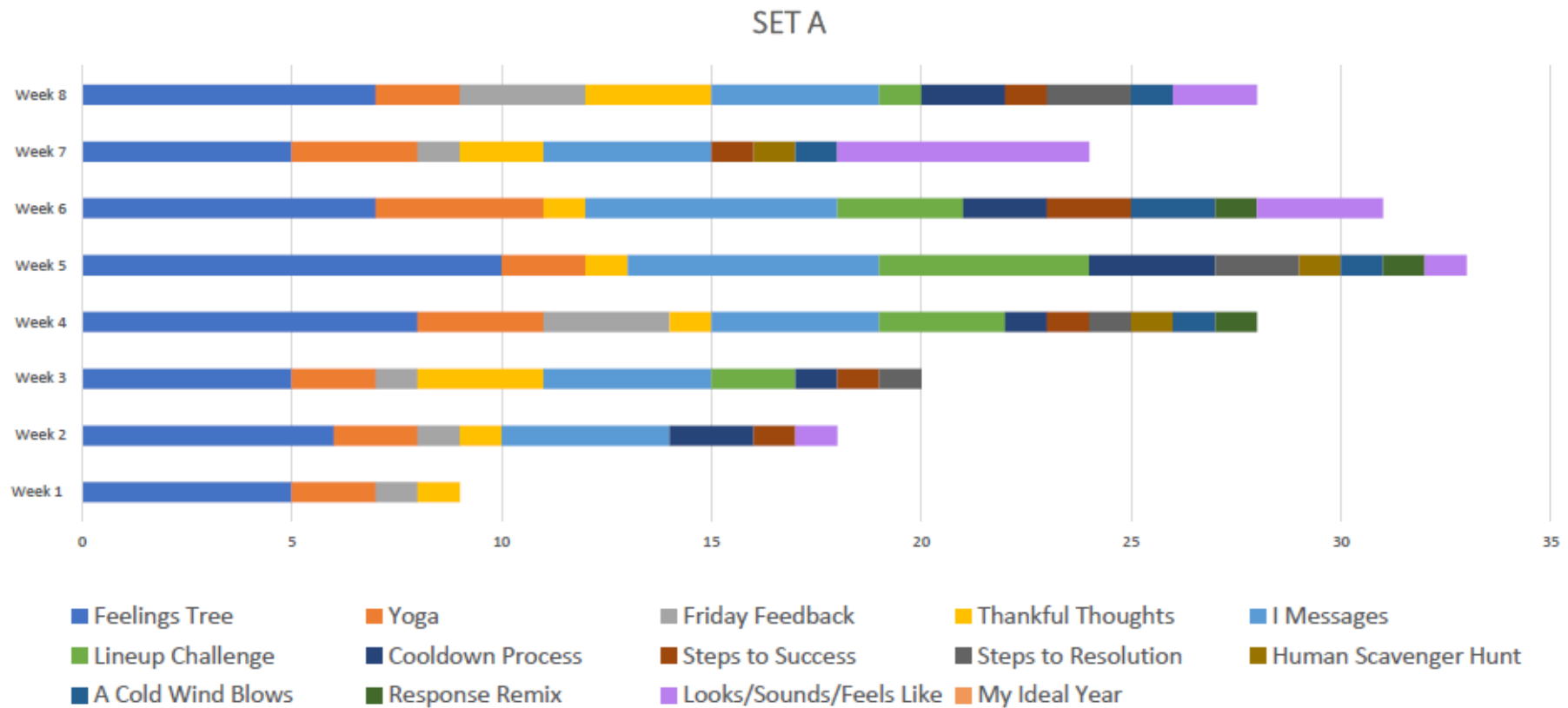
Implementation, Spring 2020 BC

Core Set
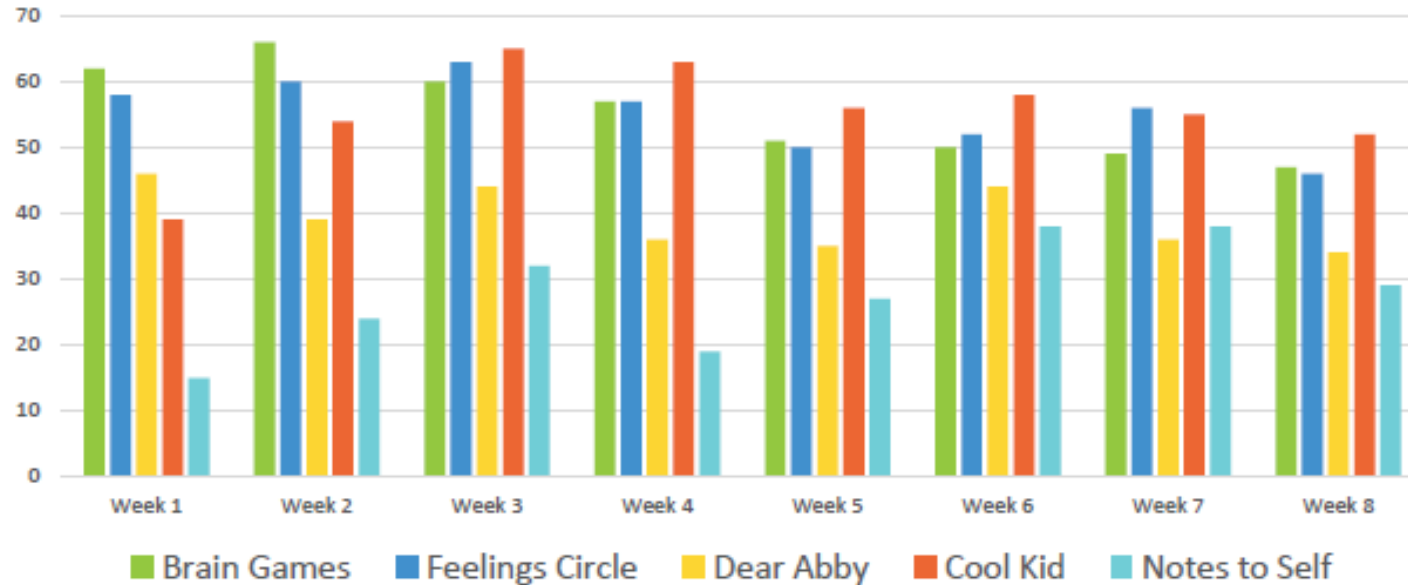
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	TOTAL
Brain Games	62	66	60	57	51	50	49	47	442
Feelings Circle	58	60	63	57	50	52	56	46	442
Dear Abby	46	39	44	36	35	44	36	34	314
Cool Kid	39	54	65	63	56	58	55	52	442
Notes to Self	15	24	32	19	27	38	38	29	222
TOTAL	220	243	264	232	219	242	234	208	

Implementation, Spring 2020 BC

Additional

SET A

Reflections/responses from the field…

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Outcomes? Coming soon…

Thank you!
(jonesst@gse.harvard.edu)