Dear Educators and Counselors,

Spring is a time of highs and lows, celebrations and stresses. As you push toward the finish line, use this lesson guide as a resource for engaging students in conversations on topics that matter.

The theme of this issue is “Taking Care of Myself.” All of the writers discuss times when they stepped up and acted in their own best interest in spite of obstacles. In some of these stories, like “Accidents Happen,” “Too Fat or Too Thin,” and “How I Stopped Cutting,” the writers detail their journey to live a healthy life. In others, writers show how they take care of themselves by standing up to injustice at home, school, and their communities.

The two lessons included in this guide focus on healthy relationships and responsible decision making. In the first lesson, for “Learning to Breathe Again,” students explore the conflicted, contradictory feelings and behaviors that can emerge when a loved one mistreats another. In the second lesson, for “Speaking My Truth,” students debate the merits of being an outspoken activist and consider issues they may want to raise awareness about.

Finally, please take the time to complete the subscriber survey included in this issue. We learned much from the previous survey, including the fact that over 70% of you who use YCteen with youth focus on social and emotional learning (SEL). Since research shows SEL skills underlie success in life, school, and career, we hope that YCteen continues to act as a resource in this area. Visit bit.ly/ycteen17 to complete the survey online. If we get your survey back by June 30, 2017, you’re eligible to win a $250 Visa gift card.

I wish you all the best as the school year concludes. Enjoy a well-earned and restful summer vacation.

Sincerely,

David Heller
Education Director

NEW WRITING CONTEST
We ask readers to write a letter to one of the writers. This will encourage close reading and writing. (See lesson inside.)
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Holding On

Story to Use: “Learning to Breathe Again,” by Anonymous, p.8

Story Summary: As the writer grows up, she witnesses her father’s abuse of her mother. After intervening in one of their fights, her father moves out and she learns more about abuse prevention through a job. She struggles with her feelings about her father, whom she still loves.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL.1).
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).

Before Reading the Story (10 min)
This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Introduce Concentric Circle activity by explaining to the group they will be doing an activity where they will share and hear different perspectives on a topic.

2. While the group is still seated, review the activity procedure. Tell the group:
   - “We will form two standing circles, one inside the other.”
   - “Each person will be facing a partner.”
   - “I will read questions aloud and everyone will have a chance to respond while their partner listens.”

3. Divide the group into two. One way to do this is to have group members count off 1-2 (If you don’t have two equal groups, you can join one).

4. Have the 1s stand and move into a circle facing outward.

5. Have the 2s stand and form a second circle around the first one, facing inward.

6. Then explain to the group that the person they’re facing will be their first partner.
7. Review the specific steps of the activity with the group. Tell them:
   - “Partners will take turns responding to a question that I ask.”
   - “When one person speaks, the other listens.”
   - “When I say, ‘Switch,’ speaker and listener will switch roles.”
   - “When time is up, I will ask one circle to rotate and everyone will have a new partner.”

8. Pose this question to the group:
   - What can cause abusive relationships?

9. After both partners have answered the question, ask the inside circle to move two spaces to the right while the outside circle stands still.

10. Repeat the process using these other questions:
    - If you were to see two dating friends get into a fight, is it your responsibility to step in and do something? Why or why not?
    - Is it possible to love someone even if they’ve hurt another person you care about?

11. Have everyone return to their seats and thank group members for sharing.

During Reading (20 min.)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called reading for a purpose. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. Reading for a purpose directions: Ask students to notice moments in the text that raise a question for them about the writer’s experiences or relationships. When this occurs in the text, students should write a “?” in the margin.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a “?” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”
After Reading the Story (15 min)

*During this post-reading activity, students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. Introduce the **Table Talk** activity by explaining to the group that they will do an activity where they move around and share their thinking about parts of the story in a small group.

2. Tell students to locate the following four quotes in their copy of the story and underline them:
   - Quote 1: “I couldn’t understand how our happy family could be shattered completely and then be put together easily in just a few hours.”
   - Quote 2: “Even though I have witnessed the fighting and arguing most of my life, it never felt normal. I never got used to it. It felt like a bad dream that I couldn’t wake from.”
   - Quote 3: “An abuser seeks power and control over their partner because they often feel powerless in other aspects of their lives.”
   - Quote 4: “I love a monster/One that isn’t under my bed/But in the flesh/Waiting to explode”

3. Give students 60 seconds to decide on their own which quote out of the four is the most thought-provoking or stands out to them the most.

4. Direct students to move to different parts of the room based on their choice (for example, students who chose quote 1 could come to the front of the room, etc.).

5. Once they have gathered at each spot, ask group members to face the people around them and share their thinking about why they chose this quote.

6. Debrief by having someone from each group briefly share a few highlights from their discussion and one new thing they learned about someone else in their group from their conversations.

7. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to the story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who stands up to peers that call her angry and too opinionated for writing about for what she believes in.

2. Introduce opinion continuum by explaining to the group that they will be doing an activity where they move around while learning more about what they and their peers think about a topic.

3. Opinion continuum directions: Clear a large area in the center of the room. On one end post a sign that reads “Agree” and on the other one that reads “Disagree.” Have students gather in the center of the space.

4. Tell students to notice the two signs you’ve posted. Then review directions:
   - I will read a statement and then you will decide whether it’s true for you (agree) or not (disagree). You will move somewhere in between the two signs that best matches your opinion.
   - You can stand anywhere along the continuum. In the middle is not sure/depends.
   - Once everyone has moved, I will invite volunteers to share why they chose to stand where they are.

5. Next, have students stand up and move to the open space that you’ve created in the room.

Story to Use: “Speaking My Truth,” by Aishamanne Williams, p. 22

Story Summary: Aishamanne is accused of being angry for “ranting” about race as a writer in her school newspaper. After interviewing some friends and teachers on the subject, she concludes that it is important for her to speak her truth, no matter how many feathers it ruffles along the way.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives (CCLS SL.1).
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences (CCLS W.10).
6. Read the first statement and have students move to a space between the two signs:
   - People stereotype and label others all the time.

7. Once everyone has moved, ask students to share why they are standing where they are. Students may change their position if they’re influenced by a peer’s opinion.

8. Repeat for these other statements:
   - Being angry and being opinionated are pretty much the same thing.
   - If you notice a problem, you should not rest until something is done about it.
   - It’s crucial to remain calm when talking about important political or social issues.
   - It’s a complement if someone calls you an “activist.”

9. Thank participants for sharing their opinions.

During Reading (20 min.)
By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called reading for a purpose. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. Reading for a purpose directions: Ask students to read for moments in the text when they agree or disagree with what’s being said. Tell them that the writer interviews a variety of her peers and uncovers a lot of opinions. If you agree with a point that’s made, put a check mark (“✓”) in the margin. If you disagree with a point, write an “X”.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a “✓” or “X” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. Next, ask the group to further consider these questions:
   - Do you think Aishamanne made the right decision to continue writing about these topics? Why or why not?
   - Do you personally connect with the story? How?
After Reading the Story (15 min)
During this post-reading activity, students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. Introduce Journal Jot and Pair-Share activity by explaining to the group they will be writing for 5 minutes in response to a prompt, then sharing their writing with a peer and the rest of the group.

2. Read this quote from the story: “When you talk about a problem, you raise awareness and let people know about it so we can work together to create a solution. If people like you don’t talk about it, how are we supposed to create change? The first step is always raising awareness.” Pause, then say, “What is a problem in your school or community that you’d like to raise awareness about? How could you raise awareness to help solve this problem?”

3. Ask students to get out their journal or a piece of paper and use it to write their response. After 5 minutes of silent writing, ask for writers to Pair-Share by turning to a partner and sharing out what they wrote.

4. Large group debrief: Bring pairs back into the large group and ask the following questions:
   - What are some issues you want to raise awareness about?
   - How would raising awareness help this issue?
   - What are some ways you could raise awareness?
Open-ended questions you can use with any story in YCteen:

1. What main problem or challenge did the writer face?
2. What choices did the teen have in trying to deal with the problem?
3. Which way of dealing with the problem was most effective for the teen? Why?
4. What strengths, skills, or resources did the teen use to address the challenge?
5. If you were in the writer's shoes what would you have done?
6. What could adults have done better to help this teen?
7. What have you learned from reading this story that you didn’t know before?
8. What connections from your own life, the world, or other text you have read, can you make to this story? This reminds me of…. (text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text)
9. What surprised you in this story?
10. Do you have a different view of this issue, or see a different way of dealing with it, after reading this story? Why or why not?
Enter online: bit.ly/yctcontest

Do you have a strong feeling about an article you read in the current issue of YCteen? We’d like to hear about it.

YCteen is written by a staff of teen writers who work in our New York City newsroom. But writing is a form of conversation, and we want you to join in.

We invite you to submit an essay in the form of a letter to the writer, responding to their story. This is an opportunity to express your opinion or present your own point of view on a story you’ve read.

Start your letter with “Dear [writer’s name]” and reference the article by the title. End it with “Sincerely” and your name, address, high school, and age.

CONTEST RULES:

• You must be between the ages of 14 and 19.

• Your essay must respond to a story in our current issue only.

• Essays should be no more than 300 words.

• If you win, your essay will be published on our website and in our print issue. Tell us if you want it to be printed anonymously—but you should still type in your full name and complete address so we know where to mail your check if you win.

• Current YCteen or Represent writers may not enter the essay contest.

• Essays may be edited by Youth Communication editors for brevity and clarity. All entries become property of Youth Communication.

Here are some prompts to inspire you:

• What stood out to you about the story you chose?

• Can you relate to what the writer experienced? How is your own experience similar, or different?

• If you disagree with the writer, explain why you think differently or how you might have handled the situation.

• Did the story change your opinion or influence your actions?

• Are there aspects that the writer has not considered?
SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOP

July 5 - August 11, 2017
11 a.m.– 4 p.m. Mon – Thurs. (plus two Fridays)
FOR NEW YORK CITY YOUTH
AGES 15-20

IS THIS LAND YOUR LAND?

Being American has meant different things to different people over the past 241 years. The United States was inspired by ideals of freedom and equality and has been a source of hope to people all over the world. But it was also founded on slavery. What does it mean to you today? Where do you fit in? Is “American” even part of your identity? We want to know your experience.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

Be part of Youth Communication’s 38th annual intensive summer writing workshop. Get one-on-one mentoring from a professional editor, write and revise personal stories about your life, go on field trips, and make friends with other writers. Participate in writing lessons and group activities exploring your own story and how it fits into the American mosaic. No prior experience is required, but you must be able to attend for all six weeks. Our stories are read by thousands of people and have been republished on the New York Times Learning Network and Huffington Post. Workshop alumni have gone on to win Posse and Gates Millennium Scholarships and attend colleges from Hunter to Harvard.

The workshop is free because our funders cover the $3,000 cost for each participant. All participants get a MetroCard and $7 for lunch each day. (Additionally, youth in foster care will receive a $600 stipend upon successful completion of the workshop.)

APPLY ONLINE BY MAY 19, 2017
bit.ly/ycteenwrite
Top candidates will be contacted by June 2

ycteen.org
Subscriber Renewal & Feedback Form

(Your response is required if you would like to continue your free subscription to YCteen.)

1. Your contact info
   First & Last Name__________________________________________
   Title_____________________________________________________
   School/Organization_______________________________________
   Address___________________________________________________ Fl/Rm______
   City_________________ State_______ Zip_____________________

2. Email address after June 30th: ____________________________
   (so that we can reach you if you win the $250 Visa Gift Card)

3. If you use YCteen lessons, how do you access them?
   __ In print — through the YCteen Lesson Guide that arrives with my
     issue of YCteen (I use approx. ___ lessons/year)
   __ Online — via an email or searching for lessons on the website
     YCteen.org (I use approx. ___ lessons/year)

4. Do you know about our teen writing program and/or summer writing workshop (circle one)?
   ___ No  ___ Yes
   If yes, how did you hear about it? (Circle as many that apply)
   Facebook/Twitter  Ad in YCteen  Email from YCteen  Colleague or Principal  NYC DOE announcement
   Other __________________________

This year, we are designing multimedia tools to enrich the stories and lessons in YCteen. We would like your input on what digital tools you use to help you as an educator.

5. How do you view videos with your students to teach content? (Check all that apply.)
   ___ I don’t watch videos with my students
   ___ I stream videos from these sites/apps: __________________________
   ___ I download videos from these sites/apps: _________________________ and play them in class.
   ___ Other method: __________________________

6. Do you allow students to use their phones to complete assignments while they are in class?
   ___ No  ___ Yes. My students use these sites/apps to complete assignments: __________________________
   How often? __________________________

Save time! Go paperless! Visit bit.ly/ycteen17 to complete this form online.
7. Do you watch videos to improve your practice as a teacher?

   ____ No    ____ Yes. I visit these sites most frequently: ____________________________________________
   How often? ____________________________________________

8. How often do you use these digital educational resources with your students?

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9. What other digital educational tools do you use with your students? ____________________________________________

10. Besides video, what other forms of multimedia do you incorporate in your classroom (i.e. music, audio, websites, apps)?

   ____________________________

11. We are a nonprofit organization and could use your help telling our funders what makes our resources (including YCteen) useful to educators and their students. What stands out most for you about YCteen? How has it improved the way you work with your students? Please be as specific as possible:

   ____________________________

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience using YCteen? What can we do better?

   ____________________________

Thank you! Please return the survey in the enclosed business reply envelope or by fax 212-279-8856 no later than June 30th. We’ll contact you by email. (Make sure you’ve completed question #2 so we can send a notification if you are the winner of the $250 Visa Gift Card.)

Save time! Go paperless! Visit bit.ly/yceen17 to complete this form online.