Dear Educators and Counselors,

We are pleased to present the January/February issue of YCteen, “Room for All of Me, Room for All of Us.” You and your students will read real-life stories about a writer who persists despite mental health struggles, a young woman balancing her personal and academic life when she’s put to work in her parents’ restaurant, and the impact of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) on a young man’s family, as well as other explorations of belonging and acceptance.

Our lessons this issue all focus on mental health and emotions. In “We Need to Talk about Black Mental Health,” writer Gabrielle Pascal explores the stigma surrounding mental health in the black community. We have included a lesson that asks your students to think about the reasons why such stigma exists in broader society, who to go to for help with negative emotions, and what they can do to help others and erase this damaging stigma.

In “Opening Up About My Anxiety,” Natalie Castelan digs into similar themes related to mental health—this time, anxiety. In the included lesson, your students have the opportunity to expand their own self-awareness and self-management by thinking about their stressors and methods for managing them.

The theme of emotions continues further with Jessica Jiang’s story “Working in My Parents’ Chinese Restaurant,” where your students will explore the experience of having mixed emotions.

Our emails are below! Please reach out to us and let us know how these lessons work for you and any other ways you use YCteen in your work with young people.

Sincerely,

Janelle Greco & Tim Fredrick
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## Summary of Lessons

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ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Erasing the Stigma

Story to Use: “Talking About Black Mental Health” by Gabrielle Pascal, p. 9

Story Summary: After she begins struggling with her own mental health, Gaby digs deeper into the Black community’s stigma around seeking professional help. She learns about the historical and systematic racism that has led the Black community to be suspicious of the healthcare system, and works to redefine “strong Black woman” for herself as someone who is strong enough to ask for help.

Lesson Objectives and COMMON CORE Standards Connections:

Students will be able to:

- Annotate a text during the reading process in order to develop an understanding of the text’s main idea and supporting details (CCS R.1 and R.2)
- Discuss their interpretation and analysis of, as well as personal connections to, a narrative nonfiction text (CCS SL.1)
- Write in response to a text (CCS W.4 and W.10)

Before Reading the Story (15 minutes)

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. Tell them that before reading a story, they are going to do an activity that allows them to do some anonymous writing on a topic related to a story they’ll be reading together.

2. Introduce the Toss One, Take One activity by explaining they are going to do an activity that gathers everyone’s ideas and allows them to hear multiple perspectives.

3. Pass out pieces of scrap paper and pencils. Tell group members *not* to write their name on their paper. This is an anonymous activity.

4. Ask group members to write a response on their paper to this question:
   - Talking about your feelings is like . . .

5. Give group members three minutes to think and then write their responses. If some group members are struggling, ask them to write about why they find it difficult to answer the prompts.

6. Write your own responses to the prompts to model the activity.

7. After group members have written their responses, tell them to crumple them into balls and toss them into the middle of the circle, or a container you have available.
8. Model for the group how you expect them to crumple and toss their responses into the center of the circle.

9. After everyone has tossed, each group member should retrieve an anonymous response and return to their seats. As an alternative, walk around the circle with the responses and have each group member blindly pick a paper ball. (If a group member happens to choose their own response, it's okay because no one will know.)

10. Go around in a circle or ask for volunteers to read aloud the response from the paper.

11. Invite group members to comment on what they heard, such as similarities, differences, or personal connections to their peers’ responses.

12. Thank group members for sharing.

**During Reading** (20 minutes)
*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 identify when they have a connection to something in the story, or when they have a question. When they have a connection, students should write a “C” in the margin. When they have a question, 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 an “C” or “?” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the questions it raised for them. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before you discuss as a whole group.
After Reading the Story (15 minutes)
During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. Introduce this activity by saying to the group:
   - “Now that we’ve read the story, we’re going to do a Journaling activity about the stigma around asking for help with mental health issues.”
   - “This is a chance to express your thoughts and feelings without worrying about spelling and grammar.”
   - “There are no right and wrong answers to these questions, just your own ideas.”
   - “If you don’t know what to write or get stuck, just keep your pencil to paper and keep writing the last word you thought of over and over until a new idea comes.”

2. Read the prompts aloud from the chart paper you’ve prepared:
   - Why is it so hard to ask for help when we are feeling sad, angry, or frustrated?
   - Who is someone you can go to for help when you have these feelings?
   - How can you be the kind of person who others can go to for help?

3. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils.

4. Give group members about 5-6 minutes to write. Move around the room offering encouragement and support.

5. When 5-6 minutes are up, tell group members to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.

6. Explain to the group that they are now going to do a Pair Share. Tell them to turn to the person next to them and take turns sharing parts of their responses that they feel comfortable sharing.

7. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. Cue partners to switch roles after the first minute. Use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before refocusing the group.

8. Lead a discussion by asking group members to describe some of the highlights of their conversations. They can share connections they made with their partners' writing, new ideas that their partner gave them, or questions they still have about the topic.

9. Thank group members for sharing and listening.
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Managing Mixed Emotions

Story to Use: “Working in My Parents' Chinese Restaurant” by Jessica Jiang, p. 12

Story Summary: Jessica juggles school and work as she begins taking shifts at her parents’ Chinese restaurant. At first, the job causes feelings of shame and resentment when Jessica realizes she has less time and less knowledge of pop culture than her friends, but she eventually comes to value the persistence and hard work that the job taught her.

Lesson Objectives and Standards Connections:

Students will be able to:
- Write in response to a prompt (CCS W.10)
- Annotate a text during the reading process in order to develop an understanding of the text’s main idea and supporting details (CCS R.1 and R.2)
- Discuss their interpretation and analysis of, as well as personal connections to, a narrative nonfiction text (CCS SL.1)

Before Reading the Story (15 minutes)

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 they will be reading a true story by a teen who has mixed feelings about working in her parents’ Chinese restaurant.

2. After welcoming the group, ask students (or post on the board) the following prompt and question:
   - “Think of a time when you had mixed feelings (i.e. joy and fear, excitement and hesitation, happiness and sadness). What caused these mixed emotions? Describe both the experience and how you felt.”

3. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils. Give students three to five minutes to write down responses on paper independently.

4. After time is up, explain to the group that they will be doing a Pair Share. Ask them to turn to a person next to them and take turns sharing their responses to the question.

5. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. Cue partners to switch roles after the first minute. Use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before re-gaining students’ attention.

6. Ask several pairs to share what they discussed.

7. Thank students for sharing.
During Reading (20 minutes)

*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 identify times when the story raises a connection or a question for them. When they have a connection, students should write a “C” in the margin. When they have a question, 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 an “C” or “?” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the questions it raised for them. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before you discuss as a whole group.

After Reading the Story (15 minutes)

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

1. Introduce the **Four Corners** activity by explaining to the group that they will be discussing Jessica’s story using quotations.

2. Prior to the activity, post the following quotations on chart paper and place each one in a different corner of the room:

   - “*By the time I got to middle school I was ashamed of working in the restaurant. I didn’t understand why at the time, but now I know it’s because it made me different.*”
   - “*I felt both a rush of happiness and a pang of guilt. Happiness because [my mother] was grateful to me for making her life easier. Guilt because of how much I hated it.*”
   - “*Besides the joy of having friends and the guilt of sneaking behind my parents’ back, I also felt shame and anger toward many customers who treated my mother with disrespect.*”
   - “*Now that I have some distance, I feel grateful towards my parents.*”
3. Divide students into four groups and assign each group to stand near a quotation.

4. Group members then discuss the quotation and what it shows about the author’s experience as well as explore why she feels the way that she does.

5. Group members should come back together and share what they learned or discussed.

6. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Jessica’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

**Strength in Sharing**

**Story to Use:** “Opening Up About My Anxiety” by Natalie Castelan, p. 16

**Summary of Stories:** Natalie struggles to control her anxiety and depression, but it isn’t until she seeks help from teachers, parents, and friends, that she’s able to access the resources she needs to feel better.

**Lesson Objectives and **COMMON CORE **Standards Connections:**

Students will be able to:

- Annotate a text during the reading process in order to develop an understanding of the text’s main idea and supporting details (CCS R.1 and R.2)
- Discuss their interpretation and analysis of, as well as personal connections to, a narrative nonfiction text and to a poem (CCS SL.1)
- Write in response to a text and to other students’ written responses (CCS W.4 and W.10)

**Before Reading the Story** (15 minutes)

*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. Tell them that before reading a story, you are going to do an activity that gets you up and moving, and introduces you to some of your peers’ opinions on topics that will be brought up in the story.

2. Introduce the **Concentric Circles** activity procedure. Tell the class:
   - “We will form two standing circles, one inside the other.”
   - “Each person will face a partner.”
   - “I will read questions aloud and everyone will have a chance to respond while their partner listens.”

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

4. Clear a space in the middle of the room and have the 1s stand and form a circle facing outward.

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

6. Explain to the class that the person they’re facing will be their first partner.
7. Tell them:
   - “Partners will take turns responding to a question that I ask.”
   - “When one person speaks, the other listens.”
   - “Each person should speak for about one minute. Make sure both of you get a chance to talk.”
   - “When time is up, I will ask one circle to rotate and everyone will have a new partner.”

8. Pose this question to the class:
   - “How do you know when you’re getting stressed out or anxious? What happens to you physically and mentally?”

9. After two minutes are up (you might want to use a timer to keep track), ask the inside circle to move two people to the right while the outside circle stands still. There should be new pairs formed.

10. Repeat the process using these other questions:
   - “Who do you typically go to when you’re feeling upset or stressed out? Why do you go to this person?”
   - “What are some techniques you use to calm down when you’re feeling anxious or upset?”

11. Have everyone return to their seats.

12. Time permitting, lead a discussion by asking students to describe some of the good points that were made during their conversations. They can also share times they agreed or disagreed with their partner, new ideas that their partner gave them, or questions they still have about the topic.

13. Thank students for sharing.

**During Reading** (20 minutes)

*Students will read a story by one of our youth writers and use in-text annotation to read actively.*

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 identify what stands out for them in the text, or when they have a reaction to something in it. When this occurs, students should write an “★” 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 an “★” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the questions it raised for them. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before they discuss as a whole group.

**After Reading the Story (15 minutes)**

*During this post-reading activity, students will use written notes passed back in forth as a way to talk about what they read.*

1. Introduce the **Silent Conversation** activity by explaining to the group that they will do an activity where they learn more about each other and find ways to connect.

2. Review the directions with the group. Tell them:
   - “Everyone will sit with a partner.”
   - “You will write independently in response to a prompt. Try to end with a question.”
   - “Then you will exchange papers and respond to your partner’s writing by answering their questions, sharing your own ideas, and by posing a new question.”
   - “You will pass notes back and forth to build a silent, written conversation with your partner.”

3. Assign group members a partner and tell them to sit beside each other.

4. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils.

5. Read the prompt aloud (or write it where students can see):
   - **What’s one part of Natalie’s story that you connected with or could relate to?**
   - **What do you think about how Natalie handled her increasing anxiety and depression?**
   - **What advice would you give to someone dealing with the same issues that Natalie is dealing with?**

6. Have everyone quietly write for one or two minutes. Then, ask partners to pass their notes and respond to each other’s writing. Move around the room to quietly check-in with group members and offer support.
7. Continue this process by directing partners to finish writing and pass their notes about every two minutes. Remind them to include questions that engage their partner and contribute to the conversation.

8. After about 10 minutes of silent conversation, ask group members to finish their last thoughts on paper. Then ask them to share with the whole group some of the highlights from their silent conversation. They can share points of agreement or disagreement, new ideas, or questions.

9. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to the writer’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
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?

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?
Do you love to write personal stories and want to be a voice for teens? Apply for our spring writing internship, which begins in February. YCteen is an award-winning, teen-written magazine that’s read by thousands of teens in print and online. YCteen articles have been republished on the New York Times Learning Network and in the Huffington Post. Writers are guided and supported by a professional editor as they learn memoir-writing and journalism skills.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- You must be between the ages of 15 and 20
- You must live in New York City and commit to working a minimum of two days a week, two hours a day for three months at our midtown Manhattan office. (Our office is open to writers from 1-6 p.m. Monday through Thursday.)

**Apply now at bit.ly/ycteenapply**

**DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1, 2019**

*While we want to take as many writers as possible, we have a limited capacity, so apply right away.*

**Questions? Contact YCteen editor Holly St. Lifer at 212-279-0708 ext. 116 or hstlifer@youthcomm.org**

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Do you have a strong feeling about an article you read in this 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 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.
• Letters should be no more than 300 words.
• If you win, your letter 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 letter contest.
• Letters 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. How might 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?