

Life Skills Class by Kelly Garasha – Syllabus

Target Age Group: Middle School Students

Course Overview

This class equips middle school students with essential life skills that help them understand and manage their emotions, think critically, solve problems, and communicate effectively. Lessons combine interactive teaching, discussion, and hands-on activities to help students apply skills in real-life situations.

Class Modules & Objectives

1. Big Feelings

What They'll Learn:

- Why feelings matter and how they affect our thoughts and actions.
- How to identify and name emotions accurately.
- Healthy ways to process and express emotions.

Key Skills:

- Emotional awareness
- Self-regulation
- Empathy

2. Big Problems

What They'll Learn:

- How to recognize the size of a problem (small, medium, large).
- Strategies for solving problems step-by-step.
- When and how to ask for help from trusted adults.

Key Skills:

- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Resilience

3. Mind Traps

What They'll Learn:

- Common thinking traps: All-or-Nothing Thinking, Catastrophizing, Over-Personalizing.
- How to challenge unhelpful thoughts.
- Replacing negative thought patterns with truthful and balanced ones.

Key Skills:

- Critical thinking
- Self-talk awareness
- Growth mindset

4. Move It or Lose It**What They'll Learn:**

- How physical movement can help reset emotions and thinking.
- Sensory strategies to regulate stress and focus.
- Creating a personal “reset plan” for challenging moments.

Key Skills:

- Stress management
- Focus and attention
- Self-care

5. Friend or Foe**What They'll Learn:**

- Conflict awareness and management.
- How to be a good listener.
- Ways to cultivate supportive, uplifting friendships and create boundaries around more challenging friendships.
- How to balance time and energy between friends, family, and self-care.

Key Skills:

- Decision-making
- Active listening
- Acting vs. reacting

5. Like it or Love it**What They'll Learn:**

- How to identify personal values, interests, and passions.
- The science of motivation and the difference between short-term enjoyment and long-term fulfillment.
- How to explore new opportunities with an open mind and make decisions based on long term fulfillment and values basis instead of instant gratification.

Key Skills:

- Self-awareness
- Exploration mindset
- Critical thinking

Teaching Methods

- Group discussions
- Brainstorming
- Teacher/Coach led idea exploration
- Scenario role-play
- Visual aids & worksheets
- Movement and sensory breaks
- Reflection activities

Assessment & Progress Tracking

- Ongoing observation of skills in class activities.
- Reflection and discussion after each lesson.
- Optional parent feedback surveys to support at-home reinforcement.

Parent Involvement

Parents will be able to observe the workbook before and after each class with the material and content covered in order to ask questions, and observe content in order to encourage practice at home.

Bonus: Parents will also receive a set of *Coaching Question Cards* to help them guide meaningful conversations with their child, reinforce learning, and build connection outside of class.