LESSON 1. NO ONE LEARNS ALONE

OVERVIEW
This lesson is created to give students a better understanding of social isolation: what it looks and sounds like, and how to identify it. This lesson is intended to give students a foundation from which to start identifying when social isolation is occurring and challenges them to think of alternative courses of action to combat social isolation.

OBJECTIVES
• Students will be able to define the terms social isolation and inclusion.
• Students will develop an awareness of social isolation and be able to identify actions that are isolating and actions that are inclusive.
• Students will create alternative endings to stories of isolation that promote inclusivity.

KEY POINTS
• Social Isolation: either a complete or near-complete lack of contact or communication between a person and other people.
• Social isolation especially affects those who are seen as “different” because of their physical appearance, disability, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, or any other reason that makes them feel “different.”
• Social isolation can happen anywhere and within any social interaction. It occurs any time you feel misunderstood, left out, or alone, without making that choice on your own.
• Students’ sense of belonging, especially at school, is of critical importance because it helps develop social and emotional well-being which is critical for academic success.
• Social isolation can look and sound different depending on the environment and the individual who is experiencing the isolation.
• Brainstorming and discussing our own experiences of social isolation can give us a better idea of what social isolation looks like in our community.

MATERIALS
• Writing materials- pencil/pens, paper
• Projector
• “Breaking Down the Walls of Social Isolation: Lili’s Story” (https://youtu.be/juFbe_sIHrA)
• No One Learns Alone PowerPoint
• Copies of “Ordinary,” “Lunch” and “The Plague” from Wonder by R.J. Palacio
• No One Learns Alone Worksheet

INTRODUCTION
• Ask students to free write about the following question:
  ✦ Have you ever felt like you didn’t belong, or have you ever felt left out?
  ✦ Describe the experience:
• What actions were taking place?
• How did you feel?
• How did you react?
  ✦ *(Accommodation: Students may also choose to verbally share or draw/doodle/identify a symbol that represents a feeling.)*
• Write the words “social isolation” and “inclusion” on the board. Tell the class, “Today we are going to be focusing on the words ‘social isolation’ and ‘inclusion.’ These words are antonyms which means they have opposite meanings. We are going to watch a video that tells the story of a young girl, who was seen as different because she was born with Alpert Syndrome, a cranio-facial syndrome, which resulted in her face looking different from other children. As you watch the video, I want you to think about what you feel or to what you can relate.”
• Have students set up a chart below their free write as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel…. or …I can relate to…</th>
<th>Because…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

• Once students have set up their chart, refer back to the words, “social isolation” and “inclusion” that are written on the board and tell students, “In addition, I want you to think about what these words might mean. When the video is over, we will try and define social isolation and inclusion as a class.”
• Provide time to watch and discuss the video: “Breaking Down the Walls of Social Isolation: Lili’s Story” (https://youtu.be/juFbe_sIHrA)
• Ask students to share out to what they related or felt about the video and then ask them to journal about the following questions:
  ✦ Why did Lili feel left out?
  ✦ Lili felt socially isolated; what do you think social isolation means?
  ✦ How do you think social isolation made Lili feel?
✦ What did social isolation look like in Lili’s experience?
✦ What effect do you think social isolation had on Lili’s academic life?
✦ What does the word inclusion mean?
✦ What did people do in the video to try to be inclusive?
✦ Imagine yourself part of Lili’s life, what are some things you could do to help her feel included?
✦ (*Accommodation: Read or pre-record audio questions for students who need reading support or select three questions to read aloud.)

• Define social isolation and inclusion as a class.
  ✦ Social Isolation: either a complete or near complete lack of contact or communication between a person and other people.
  ✦ Inclusion: to make someone part of something or part of a group; to give a sense of belonging to a person.
  ✦ (Accommodation: invite students to show through art/written words/verbal or pre-selected images their understanding of isolation. Introduce any background knowledge from the words isolated, island and include.)

• Introduction to social isolation: Walk students through the No One Learns Alone PowerPoint. Discuss the following:
  ✦ What are differences that some people have and why do you think they are more likely to be isolated?
  ✦ Social isolation especially affects those who are seen as “different” because of their physical appearance, disability, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender identity or religious beliefs.
  ✦ Where does social isolation happen?
  ✦ Social isolation can happen anywhere and within any social interaction. It occurs any time you feel misunderstood, left out, or alone, without making that choice on your own.
  ✦ Why is it important to feel like you belong at school?
  ✦ Students’ sense of belonging, especially at school, is important because it helps develop social and emotional well-being which is critical for academic success.
  ✦ Why do you think it is important to talk about experiences of social isolation at school?
  ✦ Brainstorming and discussing our own experiences of social isolation can give us a better idea of what social isolation looks like in our community.
  ✦ Social isolation can look and sound different depending on the environment and the individual who is experiencing the isolation.

**ACTIVITY: Changing Social Isolation: Creating Inclusive Stories!**
- Tell the class, “Learning about and discussing social isolation is important because it is something that affects our entire community. We are going to read examples of social isolation and then see how we can be creative and brainstorm inclusive actions that can change the ending.”
- Introduce the book Wonder: “We are going to be reading sections of a book titled Wonder by R.J. Palacio, which tells the story of August Pullman, the protagonist, who is born with a facial difference. This facial difference has prevented him from going to school until he enters fifth grade because he feels so different and uncomfortable around other children. Even though August is an ordinary kid, he must develop extra courage to enter his new school. And when he does, he is faced with instances of social isolation and must work to convince his new classmates that he is just like them despite his differences.”
- Read “Ordinary” out loud to the class and model filling out a graphic organizer that asks students to identify instances of social isolation, what actions make the character feel isolated, what feelings might be attached to it, and how they can add on, or change the story by inserting themselves into the story and taking actions that could make the character feel included.
Tell students, “With a partner, you are going to read about other instances in which August is isolated. As a team, you will describe the isolation, determine what actions were isolating, describe the feelings August experienced, and then create an alternative ending that promotes inclusion. Your team will present your new ending to the class. To ensure no one feels isolated when choosing a partner, we are going to do something different today and use an activity to select partners. I encourage you to get to know your new partner and take your first step towards combating social isolation!”

Structured partnering: It can be a nightmare for a socially isolated student when a teacher says, “pick a partner.”

Strategic and Structured Partnering Suggestions:
- Have students line up in alphabetical order and pair off alphabetically.
- Birthday: Have students line up by birthday month and pair off.
- Pass out a deck of cards and ask students to partner with the student who has either the identical card (this requires two decks and removing some cards) or has the same number card but different suit (this requires removing some cards).
- Use the paired seating chart provided by Beyond Differences in the PowerPoint and pre-plan student pairings.
- Students should read “Lunch” and “The Plague” from Wonder by R.J. Palacio and complete the “No One Learns Alone Worksheet” with a partner. Teachers may differentiate by allowing students to draw their alternative endings.

WRAP UP: STUDENTS TAKE ACTION
- Share out students’ new inclusive endings as a class.
- Have students hang their stories on the wall or display them in some way so they can view their classmates’ work.
- Encourage students to pair up with new students in every class because, NO ONE SHOULD LEARN ALONE!

ONLINE ACTIVITY
#NoOneLearnsAlone

As the final activity, ask students to craft their own story of an experience of social isolation. Students can use their phones to create a 1-minute video. Encourage students to continue the conversation about social isolation by sharing their stories on social media. Students and teachers can upload their stories to the Beyond Differences’ Facebook Page, or tag Beyond Differences on Instagram or Twitter with a caption that includes the hashtag #NoOneLearnsAlone. Students and teachers can follow the national #NoOneEatsAlone campaign and connect with others who are getting involved across the country.

Need an example of a video? Check out this awesome example created by Charlotte, a Beyond Differences Teen Board Member! (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vnAyvJZw0)