

COMPLIMENT YARN



Age Group: Any

Learning Goals:

- Build positive interpersonal skills
- Understand how healthy communication and compliments impact others
- Learn to communicate in a positive way

Materials: 3 large balls of yarn, each of a different color

Estimated Time: 25 minutes

Activity Details

1. Break the class up into 3 groups. Ask each group to stand together in a circle.
2. Explain that words have power. Every time someone says something, it builds and impacts them and others in significant ways.
3. Give each group one ball of yarn and explain the activity.
 - The ball of yarn will be thrown to someone in the circle.
 - Everyone in the circle will get the ball of yarn at least once.
 - To throw the ball, say the person's name and then a compliment about that person. For example: "Sarah! I like the way you always say hello to everyone at the start of class."
 - When you throw the yarn, hold a piece of it with you. You will start to see a web within your group.
4. Set a timer for 5 minutes. Let the groups throw their yarn balls within their group only.
5. When the timer ends, tell the class that they can now throw their yarn balls to different groups.
 - Remind them to make sure they are still calling out people's names before throwing the yarn at them, that way the student can hear the compliment they are about to receive.
6. Set the timer for another 5 minutes.
7. When the second timer ends, ask students to look around them at the web. They should be tangled in yarn and holding multiple strings at this point.
8. Explain to them that communication connects everyone. When one person says something, it spreads. This can be for good, like in our activity, or for bad.
9. Ask the students:
 - "Would you rather be caught in a positive web, like this, or a negative web full of insults?"
 - "Why is positive communication so important?"
 - "How did you feel when you received a compliment?"
 - "How did you feel when you gave a compliment to someone else?"
 - "How can you use lessons from this activity in your real life?"
 - "How can you stay positive in a bad situation?"
10. Allow students to reflect on this activity, and give them enough time to respond fully. Make sure they feel like they are being heard and valued in your classroom.

Modifications for Virtual Learning

This can be done without actual yarn just by using breakout rooms in Zoom or other video conferencing software.

- For the first part, students "popcorn" compliments to one another by just stating someone's name in their small group and delivering a compliment.
- Have someone take a screenshot of each group's room and use a markup tool to draw lines connecting youth as they conduct the activity (like yarn).
- Then, bring the whole group back together and have them continue, while someone markups a whole group screenshot with all the new connections.