



## *Video Discussion Guide*



CompassionateUSA is a collaboration of the San Antonio Peace Center, the Alamo Colleges District, and The City of San Antonio



# *Welcome to the video discussion guide for the CompassionateUSA video series.*

This guide is designed to help you engage with the [six videos featured on the CompassionateUSA website](#). and reflect on the concepts and practices they introduce. The videos are part of the CompassionateUSA campaign, a learning experience designed to enhance skills that can help us create a more compassion-centered approach to ourselves, our relationships, and our communities.

## **The guide has the following components:**

**Discussion questions:** Questions that invite you to think deeply about the concept introduced in each video. You can use these questions as prompts if you wish to write down your thoughts in a journal or to spark a conversation with others.

**Explore questions:** Questions that challenge you to explore the concept further and apply it to your own life and context. You can use them to deepen your understanding and practice of the concept or to share your insights and experiences with others.

**Contemplative practices:** Simple practices to cultivate mindfulness, compassion, and well-being. You can use it as an individual practice or as a grounding exercise for groups. The practice is based on the concept introduced in the video, but you can also adapt it to suit your needs and preferences.

**Appendix A:** This is a section that offers some group activities and resources for further learning. You can use it if you want to organize a group event around the video series, or if you want to learn more about the topics covered in the videos.

You can use this guide in different ways, depending on your goals and interests. You can use it if you are watching the videos on your own, or if you want to facilitate a group discussion. You can use it if you are watching one video or the whole series. You can follow the guide as it is, or modify it as you wish. Most importantly, you use it as a tool to support your learning journey and enhance your well-being.

We hope you enjoy watching the videos and using this guide. Thank you for joining us in this learning journey!

For Questions or Assistance with this guide, contact us at: [contact@compassionateusa.org](mailto:contact@compassionateusa.org)

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## *Video 1*

## *Be Aware: Self-Regulation and Emotional Awareness*

### Discussion

In the video, Dr. Poonam Sharma uses the stoplight as a metaphor to describe how we might experience emotional imbalance or dysregulation (3:30-6:10).

1. How can you recognize your current emotional state? What clues does your body provide? What cues help us recognize the emotional state of another person?
2. What can I do when I notice I am entering the “yellow” or “red” state? What can I do when someone I am interacting with enters those states?
3. How can compassionate awareness of our emotional states impact our life?

### Explore

Recall an event or situation where you experienced the yellow or red zone, and answer the following questions:

1. What happened before the dysregulating event?
2. What were the facts of the situation? Describe the event.
3. How did your previous experiences affect your interpretation of the event? What meaning did the event have for you?
4. How did you experience this event? What emotions arose (fear, anger, shame, sadness, insecurity)? How did you react physically (tightness, posture, facial expressions, breathing, or heart rate)?
5. How did you react? What did you say, do, or think during or after the event?
6. What was the result? Did your reaction produce a helpful, harmful, or neutral result? What was the impact of your response on yourself? On others?

## Practice

**Instructions:** Watch this [2-minute cartoon](#) narrated by Susan Salzberg.

After watching the video, reflect on which wolf you feed in your life. When does the wolf of anger, jealousy, and resentment show up for you? When does the wolf of peace, joy, and happiness show up for you?



## Video 2

### *Be Good to Yourself: Self-Compassion*

#### Discussion

1. Is it easier to be nice to others than to be nice to ourselves? If yes, why do you think that's the case?
2. Dr. Kristin Neff describes some of the common misconceptions people make about self-compassion, such as it is a form of weakness, self-pity, complacency, or selfishness. How might self-compassion become a source of strength and a tool for greater compassion for others?

#### Explore

1. Bring to mind a recent experience when you felt upset with yourself because you noticed a shortcoming or made a mistake. Imagine that you have traveled back in time to revisit that experience. Describe three things you could say or do differently that would show greater self-compassion in that scenario. How would a more self-compassionate response have changed the outcome?

#### Practice

**Instructions:** Please deeply [listen to the audio](#), reflecting on two key elements—mindfulness and expressions of kindness. Allow yourself the time and space to sit quietly, with little distractions. After listening, please reflect on the following:

Mindfulness is being present with what is happening at this moment. What did you notice about your thoughts, posture, or feelings as you listened to the audio? Self-compassion asks that we extend loving kindness to ourselves. Say a few positive, uplifting comments out loud that you need to hear right now.



## Video 3

### *Be Grateful: Gratitude and Interdependence*

#### Discussion

1. What are three things you feel grateful for today?
2. What are some things we are grateful for that we frequently take for granted?
3. How often do you notice the good things in your life and pause in gratitude?
4. Share a story about a time when someone expressed gratitude toward you.
5. Do you find it easier to express gratitude toward those you feel very close to?
6. How can feeling and expressing our gratitude help us cultivate the practice of compassion in our lives?

#### Explore

##### **Interdependence Map Activity:**

In the video, both Dr. Cynthia De Las Fuentes (0:00-1:25) and Linda Ximenez (4:37-5:05) emphasize the relationship between gratitude and interdependence.

1. Select a personal or household item to focus on for this activity. This might be a favorite food or beverage, a favorite coffee cup, a pen, or a sweater. Write or draw a picture of the item in the center of the page.
2. Now begin listing all the people, animals, objects, elements, and machines that contributed to bringing that object into your possession (e.g., raw materials, transportation, education, manufacturing, etc.). Connect each item with lines and arrows indicating how each part of the process is connected or related.

**Reflection:** Reviewing the map you created and considering the many contributors that brought the item you selected into your possession, choose one or two people (or, if you wish, an animal or insect) you do not know personally. Visualize this person in as much detail as you can, and complete a piece of reflective writing:



1. Imagine and describe what this being looks like, the sound of their voice, the clothes they wear, and their living conditions. Imagine and describe their daily tasks, the working conditions, and what it must be like to perform their work or role in creating or delivering this object.
2. Imagine and describe the resources they have that allowed them to perform their work or role (family, friends, resources, raw materials, education, skills, attitudes, knowledge).
3. Imagine and describe any hardship or suffering they may have experienced as a result of performing their work or role in creating or delivering this object (mental or physical suffering, economic limitations, environmental impact, etc.)
4. What would you like to say to this person if you could meet them?
5. Are there choices you could make or actions you could take (no matter how small) that might bring about greater well-being and less suffering for this person?

## Practice

**Instructions:** Read the poem “Gratitude” by Mary Oliver slowly and twice if necessary. Then go outside (your patio, backyard, or a park, etc.) and use all the senses available to you to observe what you feel, taste, see, hear, touch, or sense. Do this for ten minutes without the use of technology. Then fully answer Mary’s questions in the poem about your feelings and observations.

### Gratitude

by Mary Oliver

What did you notice?

The dew-snail;  
the low-flying sparrow;  
the bat, on the wind, in the dark;  
big-chested geese, in the V of sleekest  
performance;  
the soft toad, patient in the hot sand;  
the sweet-hungry ants;  
the uproar of mice in the empty house;  
the tin music of the cricket’s body;  
the blouse of the goldenrod.

What did you hear?

The thrush greeting the morning;  
the little bluebirds in their hot box;  
the salty talk of the wren,  
then the deep cup of the hour of silence.

When did you admire?

The oaks, letting down their dark and hairy fruit;  
the carrot, rising in its elongated waist;  
the onion, sheet after sheet, curved inward to  
the pale green wand;  
at the end of summer the brassy dust, the  
almost liquid beauty of the flowers;  
then the ferns, scrawned black by the frost.

What astonished you?

The swallows making their dip and turn over the  
water.

What would you like to see again?

My dog: her energy and exuberance, her  
willingness,  
her language beyond all nimbleness of tongue,  
her recklessness, her loyalty, her sweetness,  
her strong legs, her curled black lip, her snap.

What was most tender?

Queen Anne’s lace, with its parsnip root;  
the everlasting in its bonnets of wool;  
the kinks and turns of the tupelo’s body;  
the tall, blank banks of sand;  
the clam, clamped down.

What was most wonderful?

The sea, and its wide shoulders;  
the sea and its triangles;  
the sea lying back on its long athlete’s spine.

What did you think was happening?

The green beast of the hummingbird;  
the eye of the pond;  
the wet face of the lily;  
the bright, puckered knee of the broken oak;  
the red tulip of the fox’s mouth;  
the up-swing, the down-pour, the frayed sleeve  
of the first snow—

so the gods shake us from our sleep.

- Which of your senses did you use when you were in Nature? How did you use them?
- How did your experience with this poem and these questions bring you into a live encounter with gratitude and interdependence?



## Video 4

### *Be Compassionate: Compassion for Others*

#### Discussion

1. In the video, Father David Garcia describes compassion as incidents when “ordinary people do extraordinary things in moments when they are most needed” (2:43-2:54). How do you define compassion?
2. What advantages would there be if more people acted with compassion? Are there any disadvantages that might occur?
3. Describe the most compassionate person you know. What characteristics does this person have that contribute to their ability to be compassionate?

#### Explore

Father Garcia addresses the misconception that showing compassion might be seen as a weakness. Instead, compassion is the motivation to alleviate the suffering of another, which takes great strength and gives us strength. **Review the following video:** Boundaries--Brene Brown <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WpdsRPzKco>

Answer the following questions:

1. Brene Brown says the most compassionate people she knows have the most boundaries. How might developing strong personal boundaries strengthen our capacity for compassion?
2. As we learned in this video, compassion is not just feeling sorry for others, but understanding what they truly need and acting on it. Sometimes, compassion means being firm and not giving in to harmful demands. Reflect on an experience of compassion where either someone held a strong boundary with you or when you held a strong boundary of your own. How did the act of maintaining the boundary facilitate compassionate action? What would have been the outcome if the boundary was not held?

## Practice

**Instructions:** One way to build compassion is to practice an ancient contemplative exercise to help us connect with others and remember our common humanity. The goal is to cultivate our inner compassion for others.

First, take a few deep breaths and slowly shift your focus to contemplating love and kindness toward someone special to you. You may imagine your loved one happy and healthy, finding peace in their life and work. Spend a few minutes imagining yourself radiating these feelings from your body toward wherever they may be.

Next, refocus your breathing and select someone in your life that you feel neutral about. This could be a neighbor, co-worker, or someone you don't know well. Again, spend a few minutes wishing peace and warm feelings to this person.

Now select a person you actively dislike or maybe even despise. Refocus your breath to inhale and exhale more slowly. With each exhale, send a wish for the well-being, success, and peace of this person you do not like. Reflect on your relationship with this person. What would it mean for this person to be happy and connected to others?

Finally, imagine a group of people in distress (i.e., migrants, mass shooting victims) or the entirety of humanity or sentient beings. Once again, continue to wish love and kindness to all people.



## Video 5

### *Be the Change: Collective Trauma and Collective Healing*

#### Discussion

Collective trauma is the term used to describe when entire groups, communities, or societies experience a tragic event that disrupts well-being and causes harm and suffering for many people. Collective trauma events can have long-lasting effects on our minds, bodies, and emotions.

1. What is your definition of collective trauma? How is it different from individual trauma?
2. Can you think of some examples of collective trauma that have affected you or your community in the past or present?
3. What does collective healing mean to you? How do you define it?

#### Explore

1. In the video, **Be the Change-Collective Trauma and Collective Healing**, Dr. Junda Woo describes the collective trauma created by the Covid-19 pandemic. Reflect on your knowledge or experience related to the COVID-19 pandemic, or identify another example of a collective trauma event. Discuss 1-2 ways this collective trauma event impacted:
  - **Individuals** (How did the event have a direct personal impact on individuals?)
  - **Family or Relationships** (How were families or close personal relationships affected?)
  - **Communities** (How did the collective trauma event impact people in workplaces, neighborhoods, faith communities, cities, or towns?)
  - **Society** (How were social systems like education, healthcare, government, media, transportation, economics, and global affairs affected?)
2. Video Host, Dr. Cynthia De Las Fuentes, describes several approaches to advance collective healing (6:20-7:05). Drawing on your previous discussion about a particular collective trauma event, discuss how one of the collective healing examples provided might bring greater peace, healing, and unity to those impacted by collective trauma, or develop an idea of your own that would encourage collective healing.

## Practice

### **Instructions:**

Read the [1-page document by the Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) related to collective trauma.

The “How Can I Help?” section offers five ways to support others struggling from a traumatic event. Think of one person in your life who might be living through or recovering from a collectively traumatic event.

Practice out loud how you would offer these five ways to support them. If possible, reach out to this person, offer a compassionate ear, and help them to the extent that they allow and that you can provide.



## Video 6

### *Be Connected: Compassion in Systems*

#### Discussion

1. What systems do you participate in, and what is your role within that system?
2. What purpose or goals does this system strive to achieve?
3. Who is included or served by this system? Who is left out?
4. How does this system connect to or interact with other systems?
5. How might using a compassion-centered approach improve or transform this system?

#### Explore

##### **The System Iceberg:**

Build out your iceberg: [Use this template](#) to explore how systems can be transformed with compassion.

- What system are you working in, and what is your role in that system?
- What observable events do you see?
- What patterns do you notice happening over and over?
- What structures are creating those patterns?
- What mental models (world/structural views or perceived truths) are at work in the system?

Next, describe how you might begin to deal with the suffering in your complex system:

- How would you begin to engage the whole system?
- How would you expand the circle to expand the view? Who?
- How would you surface and engage the mental models and perspectives?
- How would you support collaboration (credibility) instead of competition (credit)?
- How would you transcend traditional boundaries and push for openness?
- How would you focus on stimulating a new alternative system from the existing one?

## PRACTICE

### **Instructions:**

Get an apple or another piece of fruit. Wash and dry it and read along with this guided eating reflection. This exercise asks us to be mindful of the systems that we engage in daily that allow us to live more fully.

Before taking a bite, pause for a moment. Look at the fruit in your hand and ask yourself: What systems made it possible for me to eat and enjoy this fruit? For most of our lives, we have consumed food without considering where it came from.

Take a bite of the fruit and think of the elements that came together to create the taste and texture; the soil, water, sunlight, fertilizer, and oxygen. Take another bite, fully chewing. Think about the people who tended the crop to ensure its health and maturation. Acknowledge the people who climbed the ladders or bent over to pick the fruit and those who carried the heavy bushels to get processed. Again, take a bite and notice the color, texture, and flavor. Consider the truck drivers and trains who transported your food to the local grocer. Reflect on the employees who unloaded and displayed your fruit so that you could choose the best produce to nourish your body. This fruit, and your ability to eat it, is because we are engaged in a complex system of nature, anatomy, commerce, agriculture, and transportation. The food you eat is part of a greater whole working together.

## Appendix A

### Video 1 - Be Aware: Self-Regulation and Emotional Awareness

#### Group Activity

1. Together with your groupmates, develop a skit that portrays how a person might react in each of the zones of the stoplight (See segment 3:30-6:10):
  - Green: Steady State—Feeling safe and available for connection with others
  - Yellow: Stressed State—Feeling the impulse toward fight or flight responses
  - Red: Shut Down State—Feeling frozen, hopeless, numb, or withdrawn
2. Discuss how the dysregulated states (yellow and red) might lead to a more harmful or less compassionate result.
3. Revise the skit to demonstrate how a person might draw on skills for self-regulation or direct self-compassion toward themselves to regain a sense of calm.
4. Discuss how the ability to shift into a more regulated state might help bring about a more positive and compassionate result.

#### Continue Learning:

- **Read:**

*Emotional Awareness: Overcoming the Obstacles To Psychological Balance And Compassion: A Conversation Between the Dalai Lama and Paul Ekman*, by Dalai Lama, T. G., & Paul Ekman.

*The Body Keeps the Score, Brain, Mind, And Body In The Healing Of Trauma* by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.

- **Listen:**

[How to Make Better Decisions](#)

- **Watch:**

[Are You in Red, Yellow, or Green? Dr. Poonam Sharma](#)



## Video 2 - Be Good to Yourself: Self-Compassion

### Group Activity

#### Self-Compassion Scale Walk

The video addresses the way self-compassion is often diminished due to the interference of our harsh inner critic. This activity invites participants to explore the impact created by their inner critic by physically occupying a space on the self-compassion scale.

#### Instructions:

*Facilitator:* Create a spectrogram or an imaginary scale using tape or other objects to mark the scale's endpoints that range from 0 to 10 on the floor. 0 represents the least self-criticism, and 10 represents the harshest self-critical response. (Be sure to leave enough room between the two points to allow all participants to stand on the imaginary line).

#### Step 1:

- Invite the group to imagine the points of the continuum on the floor and ask, "How hard are you on yourself?"  

It helps to demonstrate zero and ten. For example, zero is "If I do something wrong, it rolls off my back, no worries whatsoever," and one ten is, "I feel like a failure, and I want to give up." Ask members to stand where they believe they are on the line.
- Invite individual members to step off the line and share why they chose their position on the line in pairs or groups of three.

#### Step 2 Variation:

- The group leader can ask, "Where would you like to be on this line?"
- Invite the group members to step to the new place on the line they wish to be.
- Next, invite the participants to close their eyes and imagine what it would feel like if they could occupy this place on the self-critic spectrum.
- The group leader can invite those who feel comfortable to share their reaction to this reflection. The leader might also ask participants to speak aloud a phrase or sentence that describes what they would say in this new position on the self-critic spectrum.

#### Or

- Participants may return to their pair or triad and share how their lives would be different if they began to occupy this new, more self-compassionate stance. They might share ideas for how they might achieve this new position toward themselves in reality.

**Extension:** Participants can be invited to create drawings or other artwork to represent what their experience would be if they lived without a harsh self-critic.

### Continue Learning

- **Read:**

[Kristin Neff-Self Compassion Website](#)

[\*Self-Compassion: The Proven Power Of Being Kind To Yourself, by Dr. Kristin Neff\*](#)

[\*Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life With The Heart Of A Buddha, by Tara Brach\*](#)

- **Listen:**

[Being Kind To Yourself-Hidden Brain Podcast](#)

- **Watch:**

[Self-Compassion Videos-Kristin Neff](#)

[Be Kinder To Yourself-Greater Good Science Center](#)

## Video 3 - Be Grateful: Gratitude and Interdependence

### Group Activities

#### Circle of Gratitude

- Create a circle of chairs facing outward.
- Everyone takes a seat except two people (or 1) who stand in the middle of the circle.
- Another person not seated in the circle will read off a series of statements (tap someone who has made you feel seen or heard. Tap someone who makes you feel important. Tap someone who shows up when you are feeling down or lonely. Tap someone who has stepped in to support you in a time of need, etc.)
- The person/people in the circle will gently place their hand on the person's/persons' shoulder when a statement relates to that person.
- A person in the middle sits, and others take turns repeating this process.

#### Group Gratitude

This activity can be done with any group-families, friends, co-workers, or other communities of faith or practice.

Instructions: The group leader asks every member of the team to share what they are grateful for in the following three areas:

1. *Something they are grateful for within the shared group environment (at home, at work, etc.)*  
This can be anything from talking about an area of personal growth to sharing their excitement about a current project or something in the shared environment that brings them comfort, joy, or fulfillment.
2. *Someone within this group they are grateful for, and why.* Supporting one another and looking out for one another's well-being has never been more critical, and this is a chance to show appreciation for that interdependence and celebrate it. It could be something big like a family member or colleague helping us finish an important task or project or something small like someone preparing a meal or accommodating their schedule for us.
3. *Something in their life outside of the shared group environment they are grateful for.* Sharing something in this area helps remind everyone that defining ourselves solely through one role or lens is not healthy. It also creates a powerful opportunity for us to see others and be seen by others in a different light.

4. Finally, the facilitator should note everyone in the meeting who received recognition and gratitude so that they can provide appreciation for those not mentioned to ensure the gratitude practice is inclusive to everyone.

When you convene your first team gratitude practice, make it clear you intend to do this regularly, whether bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Doing so shows your team you see gratitude as an essential part of your organizational culture, helps everyone build their gratitude muscle, and encourages team members to adopt a gratitude mindset that looks for and welcomes things to be thankful for.

- based on activity published by [Naz Beheshti in Forbes](#)

### Continue Learning

- **Read**

*The Little Book of Gratitude: Create a Life of Happiness and Well-Being by Giving Thanks.* By Robert Emmons. Gaia Books Ltd (2016).

[\*Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier by Robert Emmons.\*](#)

[\*\*“The quiet profundity of Everyday Awe” by Dacher Kelter, The Atlantic. January 4, 2023\*\*](#)

- **Listen**

[“Where Gratitude Gets You”-Hidden Brain](#)

- **Watch**

[My journey to thank all the people responsible for my morning coffee-TedTalk by AJ Jacobs](#)

## Video 4 - Be Compassionate: Compassion for Others

### Group Activity

#### Stories of Compassion:

In pairs or small groups, share stories that energize feelings created by compassionate acts:

1. When did you act with compassion in your work or family life in the last week? Tell the story. What did you do? What was the result? How did you feel afterward?
2. When in the last week did someone else show compassion for you? Tell the story. What did they do? What was the result? How did you feel afterward?

### Continue Learning

- **Read**

[\*Altruism: The Power Of Compassion To Change Yourself And The World by Matthieu Ricard\*](#)

[\*Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life by Karen Armstrong\*](#)

- **Listen**

[Finding Fred-iHeart Radio](#)

[Wired for Altruism-Ted Radio Hour: NPR](#)

- **Watch**

[\*Dacher Keltner on the Evolutionary Roots of Compassion-YouTube.\*](#)

## Video 5 - Be Compassionate: Compassion for Others

Continue Learning:

- **Read:**

*Books:*

- [What Happened To You: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing. by Bruce Perry, MD, PhD, and Oprah Winfrey](#)
- [Collective Trauma, Collective Healing: Promoting Community Resilience in the Aftermath of Disaster--By Jack Saul](#)

*Articles:*

- [Collective Trauma Explained: How to Practice Collective Healing](#)
- [How does trauma spill from one generation to the next? By Rachel Zimmerman](#)

- **Listen:**

[Dealing with collective trauma in the wake of mass shootings-NPR: All Things Considered](#)

- **Watch:**

[The Wisdom of Trauma](#)

## Video 6 - Be Connected: Compassion in Systems

Group Activity:

### The Bean Game

<https://thinkingtoolsstudio.waterscenterst.org/resources/bean-game/exercise-procedure>

#### Materials

One large tub filled with beans (approximately five pounds for every 20 people)

Various utensils (a different utensil for each family group). Possibilities include teaspoons, tweezers, small coffee scoops, and tongue depressors.

Set of 4 collection cups per family group — collection cups should be clear, plastic, 16 ounces or larger, labeled for each generation: great-grandparent, grandparent, parent, child. *If you have five people in a family group, add an extra cup and label it great-great-grandparent.*



#### Introduction

Now that you have your supplies, it's time to play!

To begin, you will need to arrange the room to represent the different generations within the family that you are simulating.

#### Room Arrangement

Four people per table/group, with each person representing a different generation (Great-grandparent, grandparent, parent, child).

A large table at the front of the room to hold the tub filled with beans

#### Essential questions:

Below are the essential questions that will arise during this simulation. Sharing these questions **after** completing the activity will help generate group discussion.

What effects do the values and actions of one generation have on subsequent generations?

How do mental models of “needs” based on age and familial role differ, and how do they impact the interactions between human populations and their environment?

Instructions:

The tub of beans represents all the world’s resources one needs to survive. Ask participants to share examples of natural resources—it is optional to ask participants to differentiate between renewable and nonrenewable.

Explain how each family is part of a community that relies on the natural resource in the tub. The beans represent all kinds of natural resources. Each person in each family needs beans to live.

This game will have four rounds:

The first round is the first generation (great-grandparent). The second round is the second generation (grandparent). The third round is the third generation (parent). The fourth round is the fourth generation (child).

During each round, the representative from each family of that generation will have the opportunity to extract the natural resources (beans) for 10 seconds using their assigned utensil. Explain that family members must keep their collection cups outside the tub of beans when extracting resources. During each round, family members will “Take out as many beans as you care to.”

After each round, ask family groups to graph results over time. Family members will record results for each generation on a behavior-over-time graph. [Download a graph template here.](#)

Debrief:

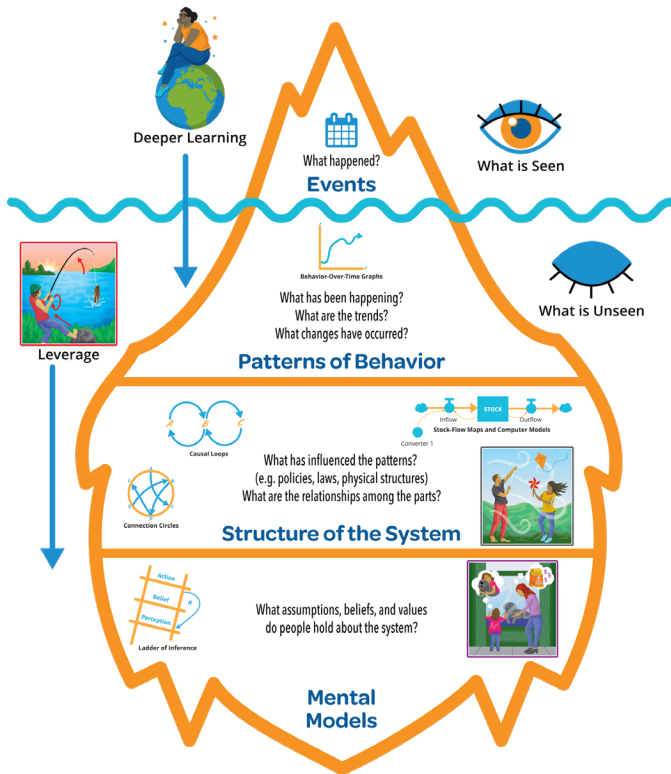
The questions below will help generate group discussion and analysis. This review will help to dig into the essential questions referenced above.

- What similarities or differences did you notice between generations?
- What similarities or differences did you notice between families?
- What, if any, advice did your family pass down through the generations?
- Why would a particular generation or family want to consume as many natural resources as possible?
- What mental models surfaced during the simulation?
- How did mental models influence people’s behavior during the simulation?
- Why would a particular generation or family want to conserve their natural resources?
- What would happen if we use our natural resources faster than they can be replaced?
- Can you think of examples where this has already occurred?



Note: This simulation can be debriefed through a variety of lenses to best match your context and desired outcomes. Possible lenses include sustainability, Habits of a Systems Thinker, and social justice.

Connecting this Simulation to the Systems Thinking Iceberg



Create an Iceberg visual like the one above using the graphs you drew during the game along with the **Tragedy of the Commons archetype** or a **stock-flow map** (see examples below):

On a large whiteboard or sheet of easel paper, post the behavior-over-time graphs of each family's bean accumulation over the four rounds, in a horizontal line across the board.

Discuss the trends participants notice in the graphs.

Brainstorm individual events that occurred during the simulation and write them on the board directly above the behavior-over-time graphs. Possible examples include:

“The family with the scoop collected the most beans.”

“I was pushed.”

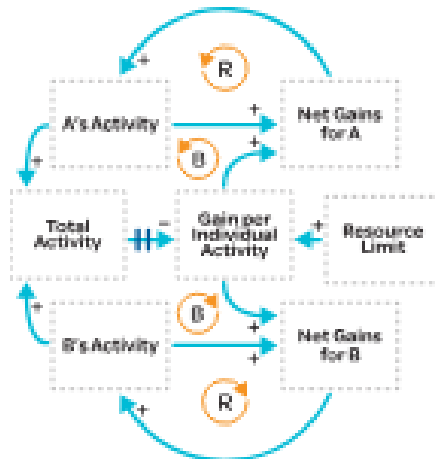
“Someone gave me some beans.”

“I spilled my beans.”

If people mention beliefs or mental models underlying what happened, write these near the bottom of the board. For example, “People were greedy.”

Discuss what caused those trends by building one of the following between the graphs and mental models.

The Tragedy of the Commons is an archetype that can be used to understand what happens in a system with finite resources. Mental models that fuel short-term resource consumption without realizing the larger picture can often have unintended consequences.



A stock-flow map can also be used to help map the structure of the system that occurred during the simulation. Here is one example.



Finally, draw a triangle around the diagram and show how you just created an iceberg framework and that by delving below the surface events, you were able to explore the dynamics and interdependencies in the system.

## Continue Learning

- **Read:**

*Butter Battle Book* 0-394-86580-4 Seuss, Dr.

*The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies And Tools For Building A Learning Organization.*  
Currency by Peter Senge.

'[Compassionate systems framework in schools.](#)' Senge, P., Boell, M., Cook, L., Martin, J. Lynn, K., Haygaru, T., Gruen, S., & Urrea, C. (2019)

- **Listen:**

[Mindset Neuroscience with Stefanie Faye-Systems Thinking](#)

- **Watch:**

[Peter Senge. Introduction to Systems Thinking. YouTube](#)