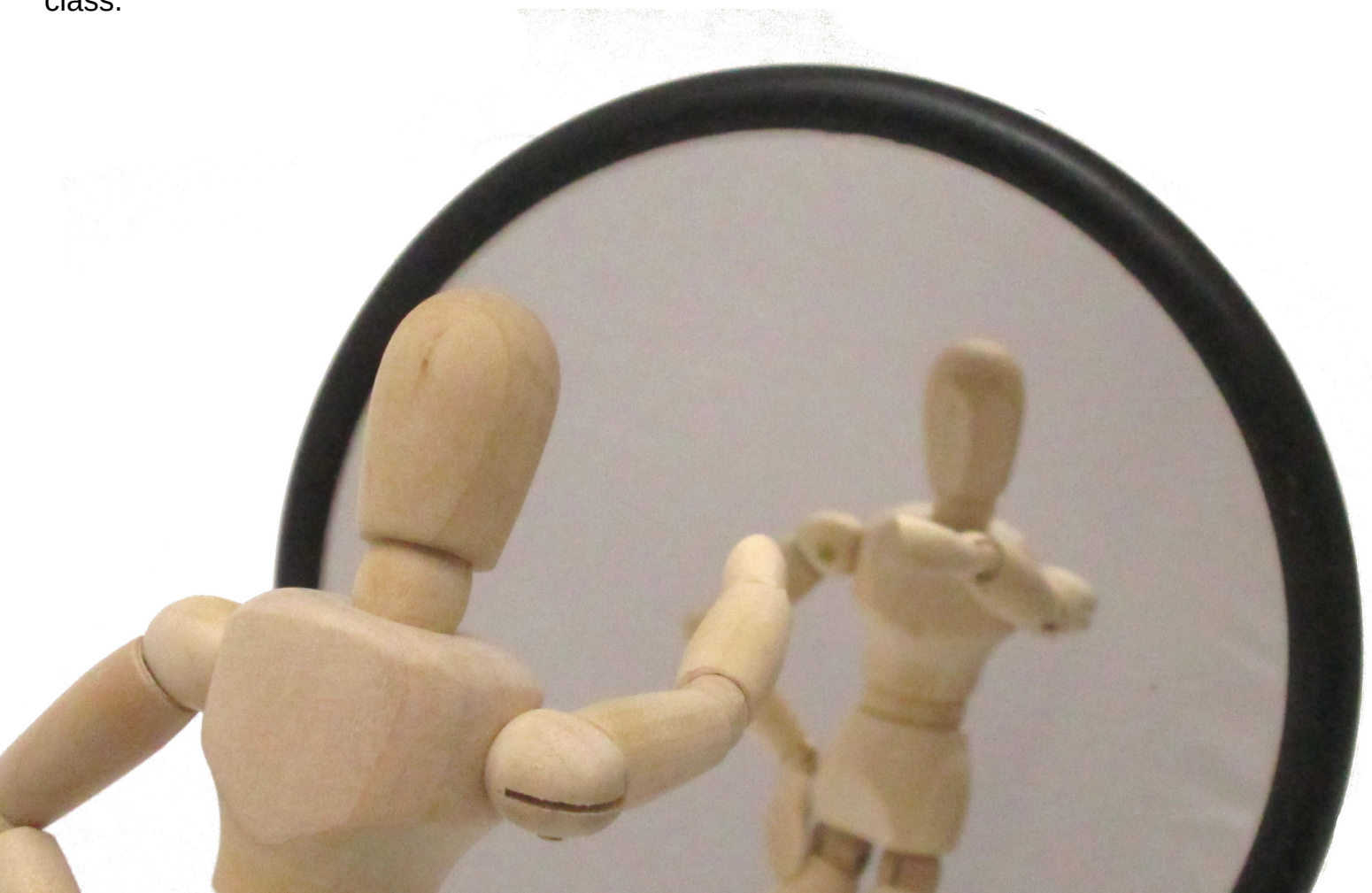


Trauma-Sensitive Classroom Activities for Secondary School Students

Grades 9 to 12

Self-Observation Activity

Start class with music and a free form writing activity that students can either choose to discard (keep to themselves) or share with the teacher. This gives students a first-instance opportunity to realize what kind of headspace they are in and how they are feeling prior to engaging with the curriculum content. This also provides an opportunity for the teacher to assess which students are entering with elevated levels of stress or who seem off-baseline. They can then support the students prior to instructional time. This helps to mitigate future disturbances for the rest of the class.



Brain Story Activity

Within this grade range, students can be introduced to more complex neurobiological understandings of identity, behaviour, and relationships. The body and its parts are tools and vessels for the brain and central nervous system (CNS). To aid in teaching students about this, there are many resources available that are developmentally appropriate, such as the Brain Story Concept Learning Cards available through the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative. Using these resources to facilitate discussions about the brain is an apt way for students to understand their neurological responses to their environment and the responses of others as being directly related to brain science.



Conclusion: Use for All Levels

These activities and practices are not grade-specific, but are more easily consumed depending on one's developmental level. Teachers can include activity examples from each grade in their class regardless of student age, if they think it will be well-received. An important aspect of introducing the activities above, or those similar, is that the activities are ungraded, non-hand-in assignments, that weave trauma-sensitive practices with academic skills such as writing, reading, and analytical thinking. Foundationally, the trauma-sensitive principles of choice and control, safety, support, voice, identity, and hopeful forward-looking stories are inherent to each of these activity suggestions. For other classroom activities that *may* be used for secondary school students, see our brief entitled: *Trauma-Sensitive Classroom Activities for Primary School Students*.