



Session 2: Live Your Why and Explore Your Free Time

Overall Introduction To All Topics in Session 2

Free time is a special chance for kids to do things they enjoy and feel good about. This session helps students think about how they spend their free time, the different benefits they get from free time activities, what makes them happy, and how they can try new things. Through Live Your Why (another Healthy Lamoille Valley initiative) and passion projects, students will learn to explore their interests and make their free time more fun and meaningful.

Subtopics

1. Live Your Why Themes/Benefits to Explore
2. Benefits and Variety in Free Time
3. Explore Your Free Time
 - a. outside of school
 - b. during recess and choice time
4. Structured vs. Unstructured Free Time
5. Passion Projects and Skill Building

6. Using Live Your Why Wellness Themes to Plan and Reflect (Share Your Why)
7. Technology Use and Free Time

**Throughout this session's topics you can integrate [Zones of Regulation](#), as mentioned in Session 1.

Subtopic 1: Live Your Why Themes/Benefits to Explore:

Support students in exploring leisure benefits by focusing on the word “benefit” and what it means in this context of free time/leisure. One person may get multiple benefits from a single activity. Different people might experience different benefits from the same activity, but many individuals will share similar benefits from certain activities.

Student Goal:

Students will explore the benefits of leisure activities (using the "[Live Your Why!](#)" and other resources) towards their interest awareness and development.

Time Frame: 30 minutes **Flexible timing/ adaptable format:** Can be completed in short segments or extended across multiple sessions.

Discussion:

- Start with a simple question “What is a benefit?”
- Ask about the benefits of some examples from their lives.
 - What benefits do you get from eating? (nutrition, family time, feeling full, energy, etc)
 - What kind of benefits do you get from (have them name different activities and think about the benefits)
 - bike riding
 - going to school
 - going to bed early
 - eating breakfast
- Now that we understand what benefits are, let’s connect the topic of benefits to how we spend out free time through our program Live Your Why.
- Discuss each of the themes from the "[Live Your Why!](#) Elementary Edition (online/and below).
 - Explore the Live Your Why website. [Live Your Why!](#)

Themes:

- Moving your body
- Connecting with people
- Working your brain
- What's in my future?
- Taking care of yourself
- Making memories
- Fun with nature
- Expressing yourself
- Getting to know your community
- What can I make with what I have?

Which of these activity topics do you like to do and what benefits do you get from each one?

Activity: Brainstorming and Sharing Leisure Activities

- Make a list of as many possible free time activities you can think of for when we're at home, at school, and in the community.
 - Could even do this as a competition between groups and then share out.
 - Have each student talk about the activities they do.
- Choose at least 4 Live Your Why categories to use in the next part of the activity.
- As students share, have them write or draw their responses on a whiteboard or chart paper under four or more categories (from Live Your Why).
 - Moving Your Body (physical)
 - Working Your Brain (mental)
 - Connecting with People (social)
 - Expressing Yourself (creative expression)

Reflection: Have students reflect on which themes they naturally gravitate towards and which ones they might want to explore further.

- “Do you notice that some of your favorite activities fall into more than one group? Or only one?”
- “What kinds of benefits do you want *more* of in your free time? How can you explore and plan for these?”)

Subtopic 2: Benefits and Variety in Free Time

The healthiest and most satisfied people engage in a variety of activities that provide many benefits (see the Live Your Why themes). One activity alone often doesn't offer all the benefits we need. And one activity can also offer us multiple benefits. A mix of activities adds up to better overall well-being.

Student goals:

- Recognize how they currently spend their free time.
- Understand that different activities can offer different kinds of benefits (like fun, learning, rest, or connection).
- Think about why having a variety of free time activities can be valuable.

Timeframe:

20–30 minutes but **Flexible timing/ adaptable format:** Can be completed in short segments or extended across multiple sessions.

Example Conversation Starters:

- “What’s something you love to do when you have free time and what benefits does it give you?”
- “Why do you think it’s good to do different types of things that give you different benefits in your free time?”
- “What is missing from your free time?”
- “What would you like to do in your free time that you are not already doing?”

Activities:

Give students a blank template or a simple worksheet (for older kids, could use [TimeWise Workbook](#) pgs 4-5) to map their free time activities and the benefits they get from each.

For younger students: They can draw pictures or write the activities they do in their free time and label the benefit (or use simple icons/colors to indicate the benefit type).

Have students share their ideas for future exploration based on the benefits/themes they connected with most and ones they want to more of.

Encourage creative thinking—what new activities can they try to explore the benefits they are curious about?

Have students choose some they might like to do (as an individual or as a group) that will give them certain benefits.

Subtopic 3a: Exploring Your Free Time (outside of school)

Free time gives kids the chance to relax, be themselves, and learn what they enjoy. For this topic, students will reflect on how they currently spend their time outside of school and what benefits (physical, connection, fun, learning, resourcefulness, movement, creativity) they get from different activities. They'll also begin to notice which activities might not be helping them feel their best.

This topic can be explored not only through discussion but also through observing and reflecting on their free time outside of the school day.

Student goals:

- Explore how they currently use their free time outside of school.
- Identify the benefits they get from different activities.
- Build awareness of the difference between healthy and less healthy ways to use their time.

Time Frame:

- 30–45 minutes Flexible timing/ adaptable format: Can be completed in short segments or extended across multiple sessions.

Example Conversation Starter:

“What do you like to do when school is over or on the weekend? and who chooses what you do?”

“How do you feel after doing that activity? Is it different from how you felt before?” (ask about screen time related to this question)

“What are some things you do just because you enjoy them? What do you learn from them?”

Discussion Questions:

- **Daily/Weekly Time Use Mapping:** Have students draw or list what they usually do during their free time each day or week outside of school or program.

- **Discussion:** What do you notice? What activities help your body? Your brain? Your friendships?
- **Review Live Your Why (LYW) Themes:** Briefly show the Live Your Why wellness categories (Moving Your Body, Connecting with People, etc). Ask students to match one or two of their free time activities to the LYW themes.
- **Exploration:** Ask students what they would like more or less of outside of school?
- **Set a leisure goal** for the after school, before school, the weekend or next week or even an upcoming vacation.
- **Optional Extension (for younger grades):** Use [Zones of Regulation](#) to explore how different activities make them feel. [See Zones of Regulation Subtopic](#) for more on this.

Subtopic 3b: Exploring Your Free Time (during recess or choice time)

Student goals:

- Reflect on how they use their free time, especially during the school day.
- Build awareness of activities that support their well-being, using Live Your Why concepts.
- Learn and practice using tools to plan and reflect on how they spend their free time.

Time Frame:

- 30–45 minutes Flexible timing/ adaptable format: Can be completed in short segments or extended across multiple sessions.

Example Conversation Starters:

“Did you have recess today? What did you do? If not, how do you feel about that? (was it indoors or outdoors)”

“What were the options for what you could do during recess/free time at school? What did you see others doing?”

“What was the best part of your recess today? What made it fun?”

“What was the worst part of recess? How might you address this? ”

“Was there something you wanted to do but didn’t get a chance to? Why?”

“How did you feel during recess—were you relaxed, excited, energetic, using your imagination, playing with a friend, wanting to play with a friend, or maybe something else?”

“If you could pick three fun things to do at recess tomorrow, what would you choose?”

Activities:

Ask: “Do you have free time at school? When?”

- Daily/Weekly Time Use Mapping: Have students draw or list what they usually do during their free time at school.
- Recess or Choice Time Reflection Buckets:
 - After recess, students place a small item (e.g., a rock, chip, or sticky note) in labeled buckets:
 - One version: Based on their emotional response (“I felt happy,” “I felt bored,” “I felt included”).
 - Another version: Based on the type of benefit (“I moved my body,” “I was creative,” “I connected with a friend”).
 - Another based on Zones of Regulation- See Session 1 (based on color code)

Group Discussion: What trends do the students notice? What helps them enjoy free time more? Are there things they'd like to try next time?

Planning Tools: Help students create a personal recess/choice-time planner. This could be as individuals or also a group activity.

Integrate Student Voice: Involve students in making suggestions for recess stations, indoor and outdoor play options, or new club time offerings. Talk about how not everyone enjoys or benefits from the same things—and that's okay!

Subtopic 4: Structured vs. Unstructured Free Time

Students benefit from having both planned activities and free play in their lives. This topic helps them understand the value of each and how a mix can help them feel balanced and happy.

Student goals:

- Learn the difference between structured (planned) and unstructured (free choice) time, and explore how they can add structure to unstructured time when helpful.
- Identify their own preferences for different types of time and understand how both can support their well-being.

Time Frame:

- 20–30 minutes Flexible timing/ adaptable format: Can be completed in short segments or extended across multiple sessions.

Example Conversation Starters:

“What’s something you do at a set time every week?”

“What do you get to choose for yourself during the day?”

“Do you like to plan what you’ll do, or do you like to decide in the moment?”

These questions can be used during planning or reflection about how students use their free time, whether in or out of school.

Activity:

- Identify what type they do most often and how they feel about that. Which part felt more fun? More free? More structured? (Use recess, free time or another experiential activity to demonstrate this)
- Discussion: Which do you have more of—structured or unstructured time? How do you feel about that?
- What do you do in your structured time? What do you do in your unstructured time? What Live Your Why wellness themes/benefits do you get in each? When do you get more? Does it feel balanced? Do you want to change that?

Subtopic 5: Explore Passion Projects

Passion projects help students go deeper into what they care about, follow their curiosity and explore what they love to do. These projects can be fun, meaningful, and a way to try something new or build a skill.

Student goals:

- Identify personal interests they would like to explore further.
- Learn, build confidence, and express creativity through passion project exploration.

Time Frame:

- 30–60 minutes (or ongoing over several sessions)

Flexible timing/ adaptable format: Can be completed in short segments or extended across multiple sessions.

This can be a weekly, monthly, semester or year long project. It can be done multiple times a year.

Example Conversation Starters:

“What’s something you’ve always wanted to try?”

“What are you good at? What do you want to get better at? What do you want to learn more about?”

“If you could become an expert or teach a class about anything, what would it be?”

“How can you bring together your passions and things you care about to help others?”

Discussion Questions:

- Passion Brainstorm: Invite students to create a “My Ideas” sheet with activities they’d love to try (cooking, art, coding, dancing, etc.).
- LYW Wellness Themes Activity: Match potential passion projects to LYW wellness categories.

- Explore Fair (optional): Host a classroom (or school-wide) “Explore Fair” where students or visitors share hobbies or skills.

Subtopic 6: Using Live Your Why Wellness Themes to Plan and Reflect

This session introduces students to the Live Your Why (LYW) wellness themes/leisure benefits and helps them reflect on their own free time activities. Students will learn to connect activities they enjoy with their personal benefits, and begin to think about how to create more balance and variety in how they use their time.

Student goals:

- Focus on Live Your Why wellness themes/leisure benefits and plan activities based on them.
- Reflect on the balance of their free time and set a simple goal for variety.

Materials:

- [Share Your Why Activity Packet \(PDF\)](#)

Activity/Discussion (Older Elementary)

Time Frame: 30-45 minutes Flexible timing/ adaptable format: Can be completed in short segments or extended across multiple sessions.

Example Conversation Starter:

"We all spend our free time in different ways—playing, hanging out with friends, creating, helping others, or learning new things. The things we choose to do can help our minds, bodies, and hearts feel good. Today we're going to explore different ways our activities can help us feel better and grow. These are called the Live Your Why wellness themes (also known as leisure benefits)."

Sorting and Matching

Show the list and give a brief example for each theme. You can use pages from the [Live Your Why Elementary Activity Worksheets](#) to help students understand the categories in an engaging, age-appropriate way.

Hand out the wellness themes on a chart or use a page from the [Share Your Why Activity Packet](#) for planning and reflection.

Encourage a short pair/share or small group conversation about one activity and what theme it supports.

As a class, create a chart showing which themes are most and least common. Talk about why variety is important.

Have each student start with one theme from the Share Your Why Activity Packet and work towards all of the themes.

Reflect:

"What do you notice about your activities? Are they mostly in one category or spread out?"

"What's one new activity you might want to try to add variety to your free time?"

For a future program: Plan a Live Your Why group activity as a class, or incorporate into choice time or recess.

Technology Use and Free Time

In this session, students reflect on how they use technology in their free time and consider the benefits and drawbacks. Through a playful “Would You Rather?” activity and guided discussion, students explore healthy digital habits and why some limits around technology use are important. This session supports responsible decision-making and self-awareness, aligning with TimeWise, 2nd Edition goals and helping students understand the role of balance and boundaries in using tech.

The topic of technology can be integrated into most topics throughout the TW2 program.

Student Goals:

- Think about how they use technology (like tablets, phones, TVs, or computers) during their free time—both at school and at home.
- Learn about the good things and not-so-good things that can come from screen time.
- Understand what it means to have a balance between screen time and other activities.
- Talk about why adults might set screen time rules and what kinds of rules feel fair and helpful.

Introduction

“We use technology for so many things—games, shows, learning, music, and more. Today we’re going to think about how technology is a part of our free time. What do we use it for? How do we feel when we use it? And how do we make sure we’re using it in a way that’s fun, healthy, and balanced?”

Would You Rather?

1. Lead a short round of “Would You Rather?” questions using a mix of digital and non-digital options.
 - Would you rather play a video game or go sledding with friends?
 - Would you rather watch a movie or make a play with your friends?
 - Would you rather text a friend or talk to them in person?
 - Would you rather watch YouTube or go on a nature walk?

2. After each question, ask students to share why they made their choice.
3. Optional: Add questions related to: “You have already been using a screen for more than an hour.....” and try “Would you rather...” again.
4. Chart answers if desired (tally results or list favorite activities).

Conversation Starters:

“Why did you choose that option?”

“Do you always choose that, or does it depend on your mood?”

“What makes one activity feel more fun or satisfying?”

Tech Talk & Limit Setting

Example Conversation Starter and Instructions:

1. Ask students: “What are some ways you use technology during your free time?”
 - Write down or draw a few common answers on the board.
2. Then ask: “What are some rules at your house about technology?” (time limits, no screens before bed, certain types of games or apps)
3. Facilitate a group conversation about why those limits might exist. Connect back to LYW themes and physical, mental, and emotional wellness, etc.
4. Optional: Introduce the idea of Zones of Regulation to help students notice how they feel before/after screen time.

Discussion Questions:

“What do your caregivers say about how and when you use screens?”

“Do you agree with those rules? Why or why not?”

“How do you feel after using screens for a long time?”

“Are there times when technology helps you connect with people? Learn something new?”

“What does a good balance look like?”

Think about motivation in using screens:

Want to

Have to

What Someone Else Thinks (this is nuanced, Influence of friends and family/relationships could be positive or negative)

Nothing else to do

For a purpose (like to get better at something or for a specific reason, to learn a new skill or meet people)

Reflection

Have students write or draw answers to:

One thing I love to do with technology is...

One limit or habit for using technology that I think is helpful is...

One way I can balance screen time with other kinds of fun is...

Encourage students to connect this reflection to a Live Your Why wellness theme, like Working Your Brain or Connecting With People.

Wrap-Up

“Technology can be a great tool for fun, learning, and connecting with others. But just like eating too much candy, too much screen time can leave us feeling tired or grumpy or just out of balance since sometimes when we use technology, time seems to fly by, only doing one thing. When we learn to use technology in healthy ways and take breaks to do other things, we feel better overall.”

Extension Ideas:

Have students brainstorm a list of “Tech/Screen-Free Fun” ideas to post in the classroom or school.

Create a home tech/screen agreement template that families can fill out together.

Use Zones of Regulation check-ins before and after tech use for a week and reflect.