

# ♥♥ Be Well This Month ♥♥

## Care for Our Social and Emotional Well-Being February 2025

*Happy Black History Month, and Happy Valentine's Day!*

*This monthly email shares information and resources for supporting social emotional learning (SEL) and well-being at home and work.*

*Be well, the Student Support Services Team*

This month's content addresses Goal 2 of [New York's Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#), which focuses on **using social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish, navigate, and maintain mutually supportive relationships with individuals and groups that nurture a strong sense of belonging.**

### Black History & Culture in New York State

"Home to [Shirley Chisholm](#), the first African American Congresswoman; Jackie Robinson, the first Black player in Major League Baseball; and the birthplace of hip hop. New York State has been the home of monumental moments in Black history that have shaped



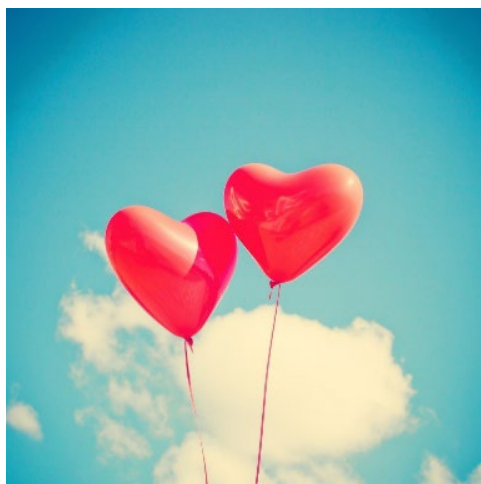
our culture today. Black history and culture are celebrated throughout the state, with events such as the [Juneteenth Festival](#) in Buffalo, and the month-long [Harlem Week](#) summer festival.

From historic sites including [Harriet Tubman National Historic Park](#) and [North Star Underground Railroad Museum](#) to cultural institutions like the [Apollo Theater](#) and [Louis Armstrong's home](#), explore New York State's rich heritage of Black history and culture today."

Explore more [Black History and Culture in New York State](#) on [iloveny.com](#).

### What is Love? A philosopher explains it's not a choice or a feeling – it's a practice

By Edith Gwendolyn Nally



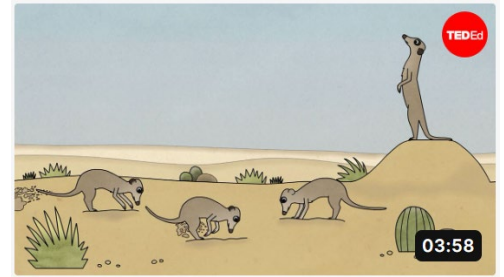
"Love is confusing. People in the U.S. Google the word "love" about 1.2 million times a month. Roughly a quarter of those searches ask "what is love" or request a "definition of love." What is all this confusion about? Neuroscience tells us that love is caused by certain chemicals in the brain. For example, when you meet someone special, the hormones dopamine and norepinephrine can trigger a reward response that makes you want to see this person again. Like tasting chocolate, you want more... But are these feelings, caused by chemical reactions in your brain, all that love is? If so, then love seems to be something that largely happens to you. You'd have as much control over falling in love as you'd have over accidentally falling in a hole – not much." Read more about

different ways of understanding love and why it's more than a feeling in [What is Love? A philosopher explains it's not a choice or a feeling – it's a practice](#) on [TheConversation.com](#).

## Why animals help each other

By Ashley Ward

“Charles Darwin introduced the notion of “survival of the fittest,” where the fittest animals are those who can survive long enough to produce healthy offspring. The fittest animal can also be the most stealthy, resourceful, or even the most cooperative. So what exactly does cooperation look like in the wild? Ashley Ward digs into the animal kingdom's capacity for generosity. [Directed by Sharon Colman, narrated by Pen-Pen Chen, music by Jarrett Farkas].” What can we learn about ourselves from them? Watch [Why animals help each other](#) on TED.com.



Why animals help each other

ASHLEY WARD

## 7 Active Listening Tips That'll Take Your Conversations to the Next Level

By Sam Brodsky



“We’ve all been there: You’re sort of listening to a friend but mostly thinking about the barely related story you’re about to tell. Or maybe someone shared a perspective at dinner that’s so infuriating your brain just shuts off. Oh, and there are those times when you get a little constructive criticism, and all you can hear is, “You suck, and I hate you.” While scenarios like these are so common, they’re also not that great for our relationships. That’s where active listening comes in.” Learn more about what active

listening is and how to do it well in [7 Active Listening Tips That'll Take Your Conversations to the Next Level](#) on Wondermind.com.

## How to manage conflict: Six essentials

By George Kohlrieser

“Afraid of conflict? You wouldn’t be human if you weren’t. However, if you train your brain to openly face conflict and negotiate win-win outcomes, you will grow your leadership effectiveness enormously. Managing conflict will create stronger bonds in a team, encourage beneficial business partnerships and improve your ability to inspire and engage. It is also a key to generating the creativity and innovation necessary to lead in today’s often turbulent markets.” Read a hostage negotiator’s strategies for managing conflict in [How to manage conflict: Six essentials](#) on IMD.com.



Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.

[Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#), 2020

Find more [resources for Social and Emotional Learning](#) on our website. We welcome your feedback about SEL or this newsletter at [studentsupportservices@nysed.gov](mailto:studentsupportservices@nysed.gov).