

"I AM" POEM

Individual, Dyadic, or Group Writing Exercise

USE THIS EXERCISE TO BUILD:



Social and
Emotional
Abilities



Safer and
More Stable
Conditions



Resilience
and a Growth
Mindset

PURPOSE

Using a series of prompts, the "I am" poem can spark deep reflection by connecting to their past, present, and future self. This is an opportunity to think about how their unique experiences have shaped their identities, and give insight into each survivors' sense of self. Participants can share their poems out loud in a powerful declaration of self.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY LENGTH: 1 HOUR

10 minutes for instructions | 40 minutes for writing | 10 minutes for reflection

MATERIALS

Templates (printed or electronic)

[LAUSD](#) "I am from": focus is on family, childhood, ancestry, home (includes examples)

[Amber Lea Gray](#) "I am": focus is on senses, wonder, dreams, hope (includes example)

Notes for the facilitator

- It is helpful to have these examples ready (or share your own, if you'd like!).

When using this activity with children:

- Consider age (recommended range: 5–18 years old)
- Parents can print out, write down, or open a blank word document with the "I am" poem template for their child(ren). Depending on the reading and writing level, parents can read the prompts to their child, and fill in the blank with their responses. Read their poem to them at the end!
- For older children, parents can share the poem template with their child and give them space to work on it individually, or help them to collaborate and write it together.



HOW TO FACILITATE THIS EXERCISE

- 1 Choose one template and share it with the participant(s).
- 2 Share with participants that their poem does not have to rhyme or make sense to anyone except themselves. The most important part is that they are honest with themselves and write from a place of truth.
- 3 Have participants take an hour to do as much as they can. Survivors can also take the template home and return to it during the next session.
- 4 Debrief with reflection questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What was it like to write this poem?
- How do you feel about your poem?
- What did you learn about yourself during the process of writing this poem?
- How did it feel to hear other participant's poems?