

Professional Learning Playbook: Adult Social Emotional Learning

Prepared by the Michigan Department of Education with support
from the Region 8 Comprehensive Center – *June 2023*



REGION 8
Indiana
Michigan
Ohio

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Module 1: Self-Awareness

Agenda

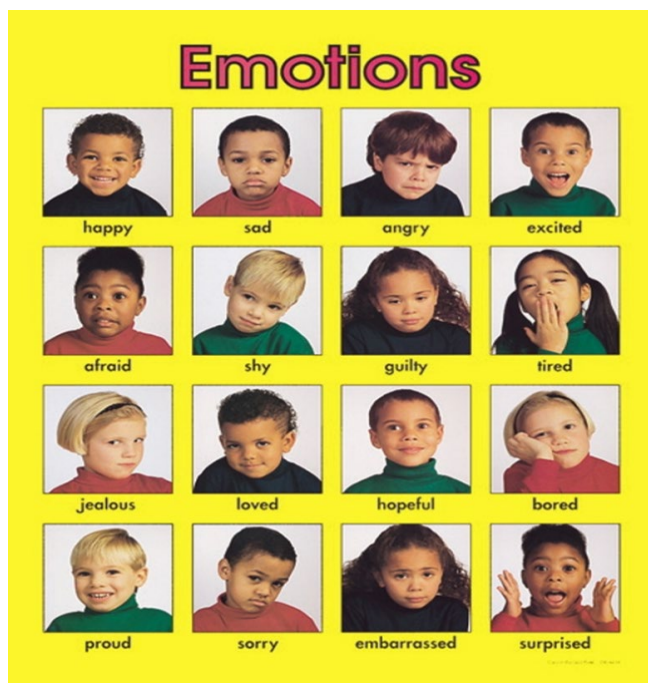
Topic	Time
Activating Activity: Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Bingo	5 minutes
Session Overview	10 minutes
Reflection Activity: Definition and Benefits of Self-Awareness	10 minutes
Explore and Discover Activity 1: Self-Awareness Video and Reflection	20 minutes
Explore and Discover Activity 2: Practicing Presence	30 minutes
Organize and Integrate Activity: Reflection and Most Important Point	30 minutes

Activating Activity: SEL Bingo

Purpose: To practice your self-awareness skills while also recognizing others' emotions.

Directions:

- Select which emotion denotes how you are feeling in this moment. Write your “bingo” answer below.
- Share your “bingo” emotion with your colleagues and discuss how that emotion impacts your motivation to learn during this session.



Bingo:

Reflection Activity: Definition and Benefits of Self-Awareness

Purpose: To test your definition of self-awareness and why it's important.

Directions:

- **Individually**, write your response to the three questions below.

- What is your definition of self-awareness?

- Why do you think it is important?

- In the space below, rate your initial definition of self-awareness based on how close it is to the official definition, using a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not at all close; 5=very close/exact).

Explore and Discover Activity 1: Self-Awareness Video and Reflection

Purpose: To clarify and deepen your understanding of self-awareness.

Directions:

- As you watch the Dysart Schools video on SEL self-awareness (2020; presented to you via PowerPoint), list the benefits of developing self-awareness that you hear.

- Complete these prompts:

- I am _____

- I can _____

- I believe _____

- I like _____

- I'm learning _____

- Reflect on your own self-awareness skills using the [Personal SEL Reflection tool](#) starting on page 47 of this playbook.

- Why do you think self-awareness is important to your personal and professional lives?

Explore and Discover Activity 2: Practicing Presence

Purpose: To deepen your understanding of self-awareness.

Directions: Read the excerpt below from *Practicing Presence: Simple Self Care Strategies for Teachers*. As you read the story, list the feelings you imagine Lisa felt as the phone rang. Note how Lisa's different identities inform her preparation to take the call. Finally, document how her life roles and responsibilities impact how she responds.

Excerpt from *Practicing Presence: Simple Self Care Strategies for Teachers*

The assistant superintendent and I were brainstorming next steps in a professional development plan when my cell phone rang. My stomach clenched. The phone calls were beginning to become more frequent and the situations more serious. My mother had been recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Inside I knew my mom wouldn't want me to share her situation with anyone. However, I was starting to get phone calls from her caregiver that she was wandering and wouldn't open the door to let the caregiver in, among other things. I was afraid I'd be called away from training during my workday and I wanted to prepare the assistant superintendent for the possibility. My father was also debilitating, fast; he had pulmonary fibrosis and his prognosis wasn't good. I didn't want to whine or seem weak by sharing my family's health challenges, but I knew there were soon to be days when my work life would be interrupted. Juggling a new position, graduate school, two school-age children and declining parents. I felt pulled in multiple directions. I took the phone call in the hallway, and kept my situation private, at least for the time being.

- Answer the questions in the space provided below:
 - What emotions do you think Lisa felt?

- How do her life roles/responsibilities impact how she responds?

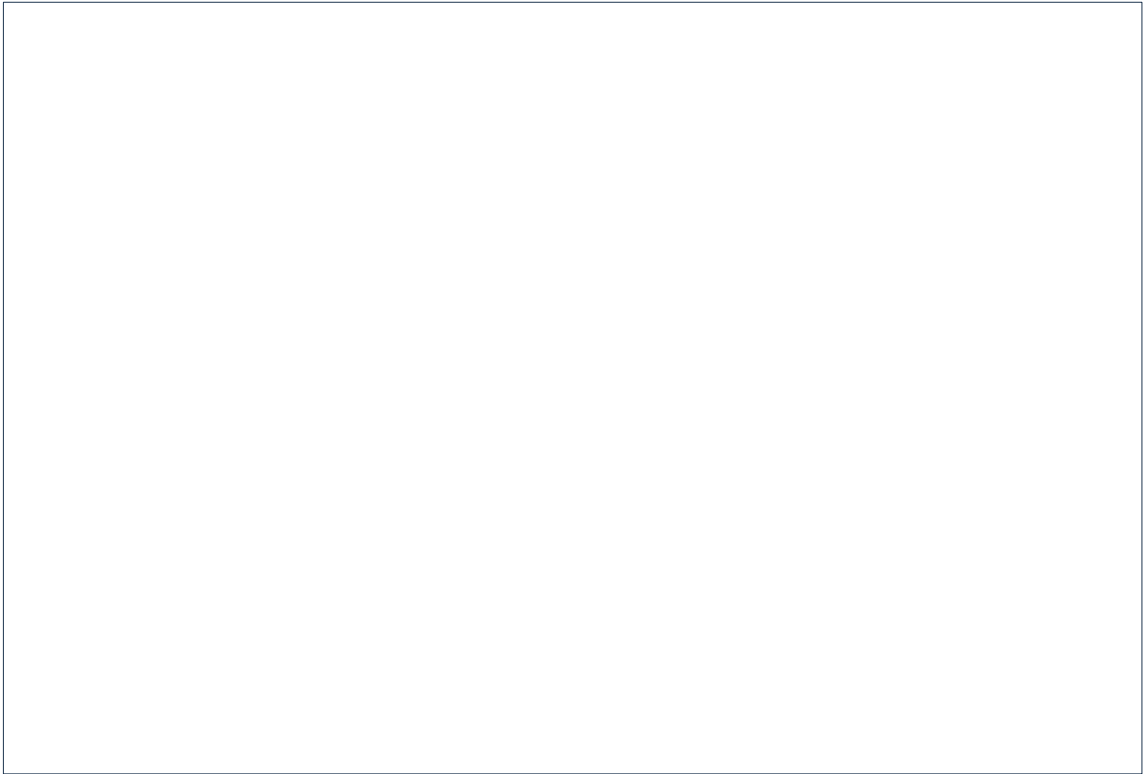
- Are there times when it is easier or harder to be self-aware?

- How have you noticed self-awareness changes when you are stressed/tired versus rested/calm? Or in various situations, classroom/meetings, and so on?

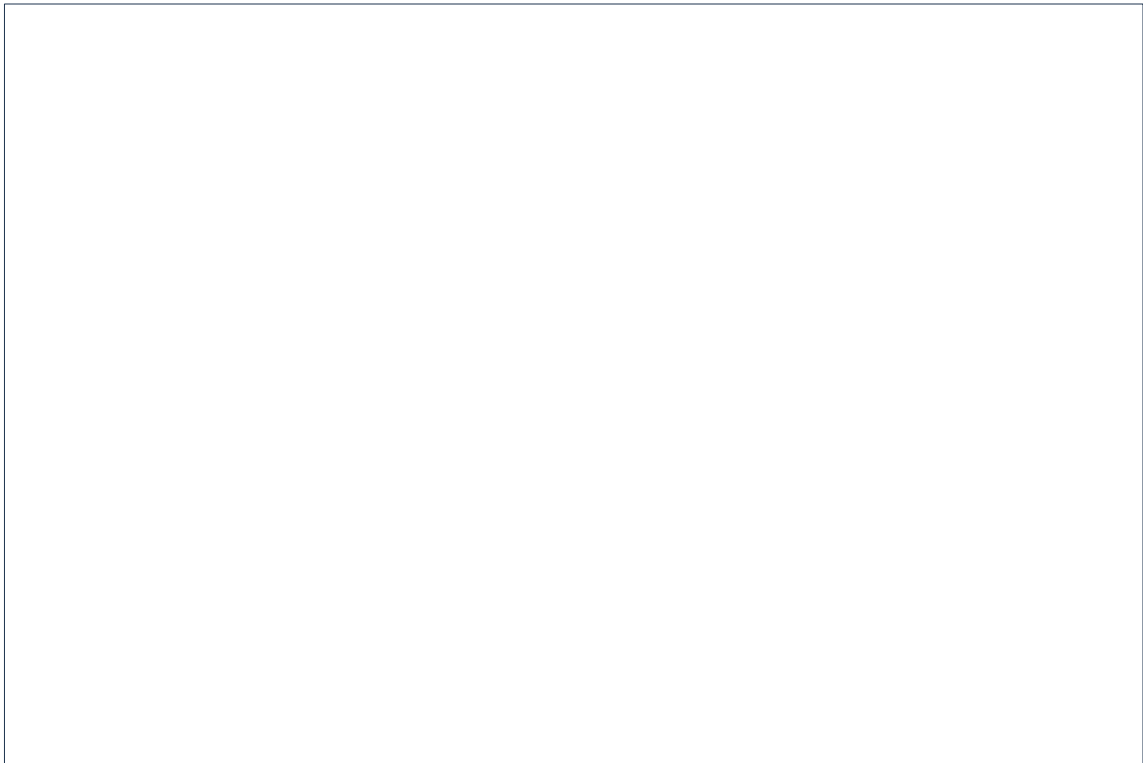
- What are some self-care/mindful practices you have found successful when you are stressed/tired/anxious/and so forth?

- How do your own self-care/mindful practices help to support your ability to be self-aware?

- Take notes from the **small group discussion** in the space below.



- Take notes from the **whole-group discussion** in the space below.



Organize and Integrate Activity: Reflection and Most Important Point

Reflection on the Benefits of Adult Self-Awareness

Purpose: To reflect on your learning and integrate it into your practice.

Directions:

- Reflect on any changes you would make to your previous definition of self-awareness.

Most Important Point

Purpose: To reflect on today's session as you distinguish and report on relevant information learned and to design your own professional learning session for self-awareness.

Directions:

- Individually, identify 1–2 key points to remember from today's session.

- In your **small group**, share your most important points to remember.

- Share how you will use what you learned to promote your personal and professional self-awareness practices.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the prompt above.

Module 2: Self-Management

Agenda

Topic	Time
Activating Activity: Mindfulness	10 minutes
Session Overview	5 minutes
Review and Reflection Activity: Self-Awareness and Self-Management	15 minutes
Explore and Discover Activity 1: Case Scenario	40 minutes
Explore and Discover Activity 2: Self-Regulation Strategies	20 minutes
Organize and Integrate Activity: Reflection on the Definition and Benefits of Self-Management	10 minutes
Closing Activity: Self-Management Reflection	10 minutes

Activating Activity: Mindfulness

Purpose: To practice your self-management skills while also recognizing your own emotions.

Directions:

Mindfulness Activity

- Access the [Pure Edge website](#).
- Click on the “Adult” button and then select one of the “Breathe” exercises that best meets your needs right now.
- Practice the “Breathe” activity.
- Reflect on its impact. How well did it work? How do you feel now?

- Select another exercise you'd like to try in the future. Write it down here.

Large Group Debrief

- How could a breathing exercise help you?

- How could a breathing exercise help your staff?

Review and Reflection Activity: Self-Awareness and Self-Management

Purpose: To reflect on your learning and integrate it into your practice.

Directions:

- Think over the last module and respond to the following prompts with examples of how your awareness of your feelings made things better:

- Identifying my feelings helped me learn ...

- Modeling my feelings helped ...

- Sharing my feelings helped me to collaborate ...

- What did I learn/remember about self-awareness?

- Take a minute to define self-management, reflect on its significance, and make a connection to equity.

- Define self-management ...

- Self-management is important to me because ...

- Self-management is connected to equity because ...

Explore and Discover Activity 1: Case Scenario

Purpose: To clarify and deepen your understanding of self-management.

Directions:

Individual Reflection

- Read Part 1 of the case scenario in this playbook (page 42): [Examining Adult Social Emotional Learning in Context: A Case Study of River Run Middle School](#).
- As you read, document examples and non-examples of self-management in the space provided below.

Examples	Non-Examples	Bias	Inequities

Small Group Discussion

- Discuss occurrences when the adults in the story chose to regulate their emotions.

- Share your own personal experiences of a time when you did (or did not) use your own skills.

- How have you noticed self-awareness influencing your ability to regulate your emotions?

- What do you notice in your ability to self-manage when you are stressed/tired versus rested/calm?

Whole-Group Debrief

- What biases and inequities did you list in your table?

- How do you think the biases and inequities you identified influence the characters' self-management skills in the case scenario?

Explore and Discover Activity 2: Self-Regulation Strategies

Purpose: To identify ways adults can self-manage.

Directions:

- Read this [Greater Good in Education article about SEL for adults](#).

Skills that develop self-awareness include:

- Labeling and recognizing one’s emotions
- Identifying what triggers own emotions
- Analyzing emotions and how they affect others
- Understanding the relationship between one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
- Recognizing one’s needs, values, judgments, and biases
- Identifying personal strengths and areas for growth
- Practicing self-compassion
- Cultivating self-confidence, positive self-regard, a “growth” mindset, and optimism

Self-management skills include:

- Regulating and expressing one’s emotions thoughtfully
 - Demonstrating perseverance and resilience to overcome obstacles
 - Sustaining healthy boundaries
 - Applying strategies to reduce personal and interpersonal stress
 - Setting and monitoring short-term and long-term goals
 - Advocating for oneself and one’s needs
 - Maintaining attention
 - Using feedback constructively
- What skills resonate with you professionally? Personally?

- Which skills are more challenging for you professionally? Personally?

- Which skill(s) would you like to strengthen this year?

Organize and Integrate Activity: Reflect on the Definition and Benefits of Self-Management

Purpose: Distinguish and report on relevant information learned during today's session.

Directions:

- Review your definition from the [Review and Reflection Activity: Self-Awareness and Self-Management](#).
- What changes would you make to your previous self-management definition now and why?

Most Important Point

- Reflect on how you will use what you learned today to support your personal and professional self-management practices.

Closing Activity: Self-Management Reflection

Purpose: To reflect on the influence your feelings and beliefs have on achieving your goals.

Directions:

- Review the [Center for Safe Alaskans SEL Reflection tool](#).

Respond to the following prompts:

- What positive feelings and beliefs about yourself arise when you achieve something you value?

- What role might these beliefs play in helping reach your goals?

Module 3: Social Awareness

Agenda

Topic	Time
Activating Activity: Help Wanted Ad	10 minutes
Session Overview	10 minutes
Explore and Discover Activity I: Save the Last Word for Me	30 minutes
Explore and Discover Activity 2: Case Scenario	40 minutes
Organize and Integrate Activity: Most Important Point	30 minutes

Activating Activity: Help Wanted Ad

Purpose: To spark conversation about the topic, establish readiness for further exploration, and create a vehicle for recalling or summarizing important information (*adapted from Lipton & Wellman, 2011*).

Directions:

- Jot down 2–3 skills for both self-awareness and self-management here:

- In pairs, create a “Help Wanted” ad based on the skills of self-awareness and self-management. Be ready to share your ad with the full group.

Wanted ...

Explore and Discover Activity 1: Save the Last Word for Me

Purpose: To clarify and deepen your thinking about an article read by the group.

Directions:

- **Individually**, respond to the following questions:

- What is your definition of social awareness?

- Why do you think social awareness is important for adults?

- **Individually**, take 7 minutes to read the article: [Social Awareness: What Is It? Why Is It Important?](#) Identify what you consider to be the 2–3 most significant ideas addressed in the article and highlight those passages.
- In **small groups**,
 - Introduce yourselves if new to one another.
 - Identify a timekeeper.
 - Have a volunteer read one highlighted passage to the group without saying why they selected it.
 - Individually, pause to consider what this passage means to you.
 - In round robin fashion, take up to 1 minute to share what the passage means to you or what questions it raises for you.
 - Give the volunteer up to 3 minutes to share “the last word” about why they picked the passage.
 - Repeat the process until everyone has had a chance to read a highlighted passage.
- **Individually**, review your definition of social awareness and your list of benefits at the top of this activity. Based on your dialogue around the article, make any relevant revisions to what you initially wrote.

- Reflect on the changes you made and why you made those changes:

- How might you use the Save the Last Word for Me protocol in the future to build educators' perspective-taking and listening skills?

Explore and Discover Activity 2: Case Scenario

Purpose: To increase understanding of adult social awareness behaviors and recognition of those behaviors in practice.

Directions:

- Read the behaviors listed in the [Personal SEL Reflection tool about social awareness](#) skills.
- **Individually**, take 10 minutes to review the [case scenario](#) on page 42. Pay close attention for examples of adult social emotional skills. Reflect on the following questions:

- How did adults display empathy and compassion?

- How did adults learn from and/or appreciate the different experiences of others?

- As you read the scenario, use the graphic organizer on the following page to list examples and non-examples of social awareness evident in the case.
- Discuss in **small groups**:
 - How did adults display empathy and compassion?
 - How did adults learn from and/or appreciate the different experiences of others?
 - What were examples and non-examples of social awareness in the case?
 - If time permits, identify examples of self-awareness and self-management.
- Take 10 minutes to self-assess your use of social awareness skills on the [Personal SEL Reflection tool](#) on page 47 of your playbook.

- Select one behavior to address. Write your goal here:

- Describe the steps you will take to accomplish your goal:

Case Scenario Graphic Organizer

EMPATHY AND COMPASSION	Examples	Non-Examples
I can seek to understand a person's perspective and feelings.		
I can pay attention to the feelings of others and recognize how my words and behavior impact them.		
I show care for others when I see that they have been harmed in some way..		

PERSPECTIVE TAKING	Examples	Non-Examples
I can work to learn about the experiences of people of different identities, including different ethnicities, religions, sexual identities.		
I can learn from those who have different opinions than me.		

I can ask others about their experience & perspective before offering my version of events.		
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UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CONTEXT	Examples	Non-Examples
I can understand and explain the systemic, historical, and organizational forces that create barriers for particular groups of people.		
I honor and celebrate the cultural differences within my school community/workplace.		
I can recognize and articulate the strengths of young people and their families and view them as partners.		

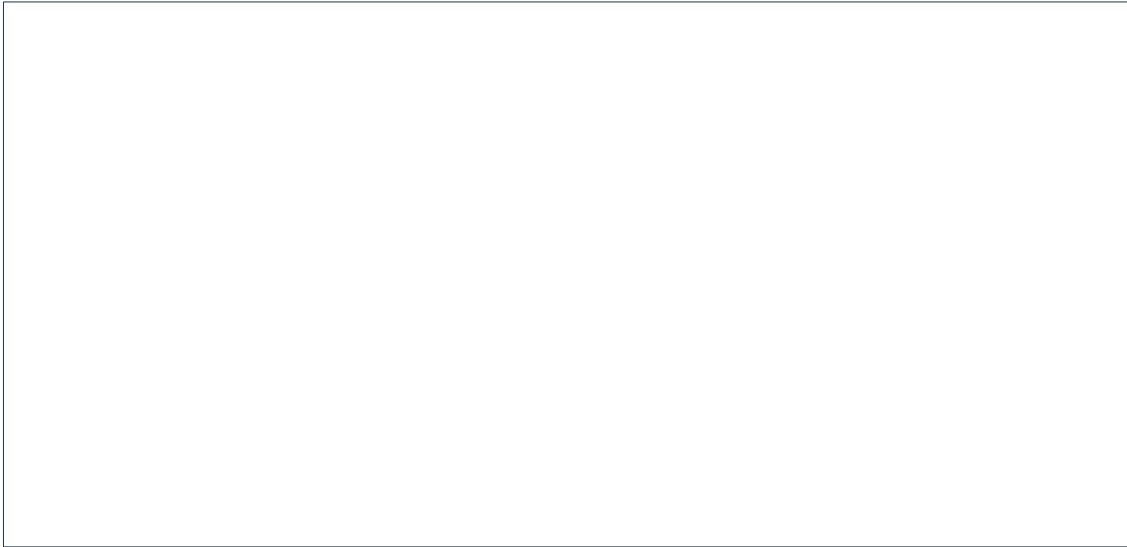
- Select a behavior to work on. Describe what steps you will take to accomplish your goal.

Organize and Integrate Activity: Most Important Point

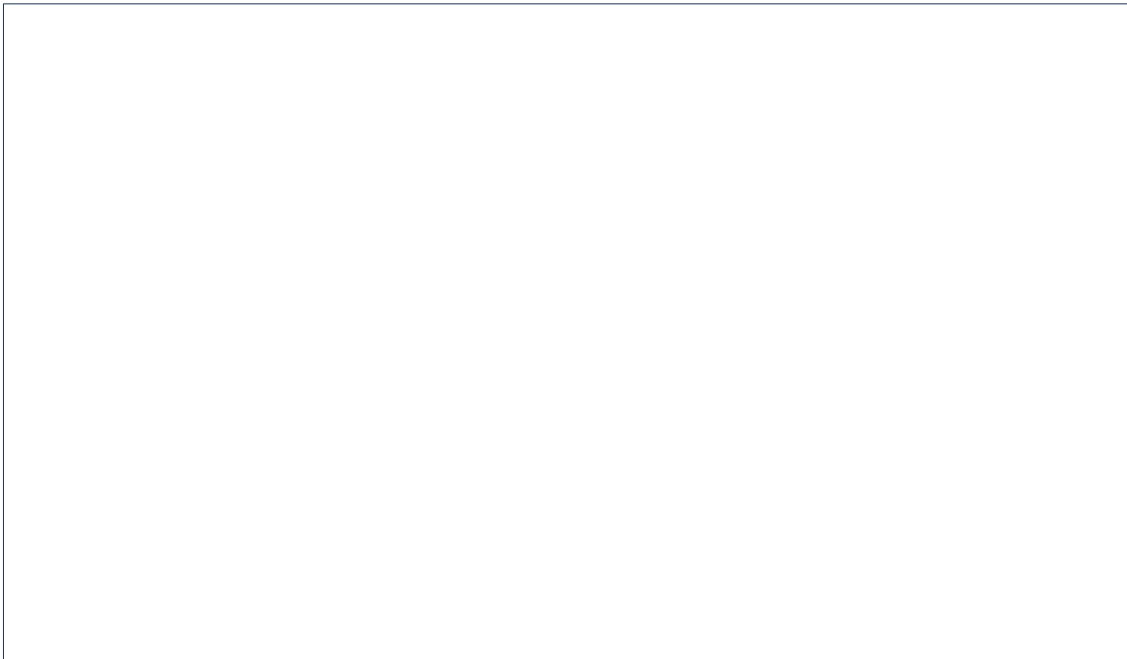
Purpose: To distinguish and reflect on important information learned during today's session and identify opportunities to support schoolwide adult social awareness.

Directions:

- **Individually**, identify 1–2 key points to remember from today's session:



- In **small groups**, share your most important points to remember.



Module 4: Responsible Decision-Making

Agenda

Topic	Time
Activating Activity: Four Corners	15 minutes
Session Overview	10 minutes
Reflection Activity: Definition and Benefits of Responsible Decision-Making	10 minutes
Explore and Discover Activity: Case Scenario	30 minutes
Organize and Integrate Activity: Reflection and Most Important Point	30 minutes

Activating Activity: Four Corners

Purpose: To practice responsible decision-making skills while developing social awareness skills.

Directions:

- Select which one of the four seasons—spring, summer, fall, winter—resonates with you the most and go to that corner in the room (or if a virtual session, use breakout rooms).
- Once in the breakout room, discuss why your selected season is the best; why you chose it.
- Identify a spokesperson to make the case for the group's choice to the larger group for 30 seconds.

- Come back to collectively plead the group's case in 30 seconds.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write or draw their collective case.

Reflection Activity: Definition and Benefits of Responsible Decision-Making

Purpose: To test your definition of responsible decision-making and why it's important.

Directions:

- **Individually**, write your response to the three questions below:

- What is your definition of responsible decision-making?

- Why do you think it is important?

- What are your ideas about the ways equity and perspective taking fit within responsible decision-making?

- Read the definition of responsible decision-making (provided via slide).
- Rate 1 to 5 (1=not at all close; 5=very close/exact), how close you got to the official definition versus what you initially wrote: _____
- Reflect on your own responsible [decision-making skills using the Personal SEL Reflection tool](#) on page 49 of this playbook.

Explore and Discover Activity: Case Scenario

Purpose: To clarify and deepen your understanding of responsible decision-making.

Directions:

- **Individually**, take 10 minutes to read the [case scenario on page 42](#).
- Pay close attention for adult responsible decision-making.
- As you read the scenario, use the table below to list examples and non-examples of responsible decision-making evident in the case.

Case Scenario Graphic Organizer

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING	Examples	Non-Examples
Problem Analysis		
Identifying Solutions		
Reflection on Impact		

- In **small groups**,
 - Discuss when the adults in the story chose responsible decision-making.
 - Share your own personal experience of a time when you did (or did not) use responsible decision-making.
 - How have you noticed self-awareness or management influencing your responsible decision-making (i.e., when you are stressed/tired versus rested/calm)?
 - If time permits, identify examples of self-awareness or self-management in the case.

Organize and Integrate Activity: Reflection and Most Important Point

Purpose: To reflect on today's learning and how to integrate it into practice.

Directions: **Individually**, reflect on the questions below.

- As you think about the scenario, reflect on your values. How are your values reflected in your decisions both professionally and personally?

- Take a moment to consider what you've learned today, through the activities and self-reflection. How has your perspective on responsible decision-making shifted?

- What changes you will make, both professionally and personally, to strengthen your skills?

- What is one step you will commit to in order to strengthen your decision-making skills?

- What is one "Aha!" moment you had today, and any other reflections on the day that you feel comfortable sharing. Be ready to share with your small group.

Module 5: Relationship Skills

Agenda

Topic	Time
<u>Welcoming/Inclusion Activity: Choose Your Own Adventure</u>	10 minutes
Session Overview	10 minutes
<u>Explore and Discover Activity 1: Definition and Benefits of Relationship Skills</u>	30 minutes
<u>Explore and Discover Activity 2: Case Scenario</u>	30 minutes
<u>Organize and Integrate Activity: Most Important Point</u>	20 minutes

Welcoming/Inclusion Activity: Choose Your Own Adventure

Purpose: To practice your relationship skills by building connections and strengthening communication.

Directions:

- Select which one of the five options of favorites you would like to share: comfort food, traditions, gift given, gift received, or vacation.
- Once in small groups, discuss why it is your favorite.
- Identify a spokesperson to share highlights from your group’s discussion.

Explore and Discover Activity 1: Definition and Benefits of Relationship Skills

Purpose: To review and analyze different definitions of relationship skills.

Directions:

- Read the definitions below and respond to the following questions.

Relationship Skills Definitions:

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL): Relationship skills are the abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive connections that include the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership and seek or offer help when needed.

Michigan Model for Health: Healthy Relationships are important to the quality of a person's life and include skills that center around respect, honesty, trust, support, fairness and equality and good communication.

Great Lakes Equity Center: Relationship skills are the abilities to cultivate empowering connections with diverse individuals and groups through acknowledging individuals' assets, agency funds of knowledge and community practices.

- What definition do you like best? Why do you like it?

- Do the definitions include lived experiences and perspective taking? How does this fit in with relationship skills?

- Do they highlight collaborative experiences?

- What is missing from the definitions?

- Are the definitions easy to understand and share with others?

- Use the [Personal SEL Reflection around relationship skills](#) on page 50 of your playbook to self-assess your practice.

- Which skills are easy for you and which are more challenging?

- What makes these skills easy for you (internally and externally)?

- What makes them harder?

In **small groups**, discuss:

- What surprised you as you did the self-assessment?
 - What is significant about relationship skills?
 - How does equity influence your relationship skills?
-
- Select one skill you will work on and write it below.

Explore and Discover Activity 2: Case Scenario

Purpose: To look for similarities and differences in the case scenario and your building/district and identify ways to systematically support relationship skills.

Directions:

- **Individually**, take 5 minutes to review the [case scenario](#) on page 42 and note examples and non-examples of relationship skills using the graphic organizer on the next page.
- Take 5 minutes to review the scenario and consider the similarities of behavior between those of characters in the scenario and behaviors of staff in your building/district. As you review the scenario, reflect on the following questions:
 - How might staff in the scenario have “changed the script” to exhibit more effective SEL behaviors or policies? For example, the physical education (PE) teacher could change the PE dress code and her response to Sarafina’s head scarf.

- Select two practices in the scenario and compare them to what happens in your school. Share a positive example.

- How are the effective relationship skills in the scenario like practices by staff in your school/district?

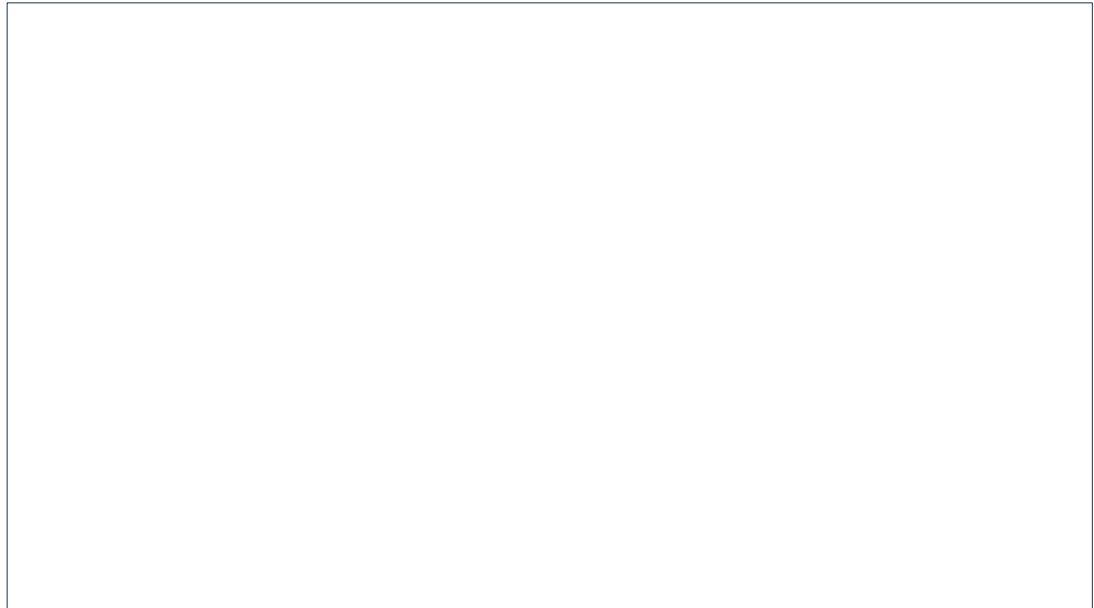
- What are some non-examples of practices found in the case scenario that are also observed in your school/district? What actions could be taken to change the script?

Case Scenario Graphic Organizer

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS	Examples	Non-Examples
Communication		
Building Relationships & Teamwork		
Conflict Management		

- Discuss in your **small group**:
 - Are there policies and practices that support relationships?
 - What practices hinder relationship building?

- How does your district use relationship skills to lift up the urgency of staff burnout or staff leaving the district/profession?



Organize and Integrate Activity: Most Important Point

Purpose: To reflect on learning and integrate it into practice.

Directions:

- Reflect on any policies/practices that would strengthen adult relationship skills in your building/district.

- Reflect on what may hinder the nurturing/support for adult relationship skills.
 - Write down one strategy/practice/policy that you feel would support effective relationship skills in your school/district.

- Write down one thing you can do individually to support and strengthen your relationship skills.

- **Individually**, identify 1–2 key points to remember from today’s session.

- In your **small group**, share your most important points to remember.

Case Scenario: River Run Middle School

Examining Adult Social Emotional Learning in Context: A Case Scenario of River Run Middle School

Characters:

Sarafina – 6th-grade student

Elizabeth – 6th-grade student

Ms. Ramirez – physical education (PE) teacher

Mr. Washington – middle school principal

Ms. Jackson – 6th-grade science teacher

Ms. Parker – 6th-grade math teacher

Ms. Ortiz – School-based social worker

Ms. Smith – Sarafina’s mom

Ms. Wright – administrative assistant

Mr. Easton – 6th-grade English teacher

Mr. Gray – assistant principal

Part 1:

Dressed for PE class, Sarafina suddenly realizes she does not have a hair tie for her long dreadlocks. She asks her classmates, but none of them have an extra one. Late for attendance, Sarafina quickly rolls her hair up and into her head scarf and runs out to the gymnasium floor just in time to hear the teacher call her name. “Here!” Sarafina calls, glad she has made it to class on time.

“Sarafina, we’ve been down this road before; you cannot wear a headscarf like that for PE class,” sighs Ms. Ramirez. “You need to have your hair tied up properly or else you have to sit out of class.” “Ms. Ramirez, I tried to borrow a hair tie; this is the best I can do,” pleads Sarafina. Ms. Ramirez will not budge and says, “School policy states you cannot wear headscarves to school. It’s a safety issue. Either take the scarf off or sit out and lose your participation points again for the day.” Sarafina looks around and sees some of her classmates have large ornate bows in their hair. The cheerleaders are wearing bows in their hair because it is “game day.” Sarafina begins to voice this point but does not want to be in trouble. At the same time, she does not want to participate in PE without securing her dreads. Having her long hair fly around would probably draw more attention than it’s worth. Heading toward the bleachers, Sarafina hears her classmates whispering about her and watches as Ms. Ramirez puts a mark in the gradebook deducting Sarafina’s participation points.

It was Monday and Ms. Ramirez was already tired from not getting enough sleep the night before. Her mother recently moved in so Ms. Ramirez can take care of her. Her mother fell in the middle of the night and Ms. Ramirez only had a few hours of sleep. On top of that, Ms. Ramirez’s partner is not

supportive of her mother moving into their home, but Ms. Ramirez has limited options and wants to make sure her mother receives quality care in the last few years of her life. Ms. Ramirez was not in the mood for students who did not have the proper dress for her class.

Ms. Ramirez knew she should have taken the day off to get some rest, but the principal, Mr. Washington, had not been flexible and understanding with Ms. Ramirez's new change in her family life and she feels like he does not give her fair treatment. There is a building substitute teacher that provides support for core subject teachers, but Mr. Washington does not allow Ms. Ramirez to have coverage for her class, so it makes it more difficult to miss a day.

Ms. Ramirez also feels that Mr. Washington does not like her. In the last staff meeting, Ms. Ramirez said to her colleagues, "Last week, a 6th-grader told me the funniest joke." Mr. Washington said sarcastically, "Yolk!? What is a funny yolk? Is that a new breakfast thing?" as he laughed. Ms. Ramirez decided not to share the joke that suddenly did not seem so funny anymore. Ms. Ramirez immigrated from Mexico to the United States with her family when she was 3 years old and has a slight accent.

Ms. Jackson, the 6th-grade science teacher, who had been eager to hear the joke, noticed the change in Ms. Ramirez's body language after Mr. Washington's comment. After the meeting, she asked Ms. Ramirez, "You, okay?" "I just feel so angry all the time. I don't know ... I just need to get over it. I'll be fine," said Ms. Ramirez. "I hear your anger. I'm sure there is a lot to feel angry about and that's okay," said Ms. Jackson. "Yeah, I guess," said Ms. Ramirez. "Well, take a deep breath. Let me know how I can support you or help you problem-solve," Ms. Jackson said. "I appreciate that," Ms. Ramirez replied. Ms. Jackson said, "I still want to hear that joke from your student. You're so good at recognizing the strengths and positives about our 6th graders, so I know it's a good joke."

A few days after Sarafina did not dress for PE, she was in math class when Elizabeth walked by her desk and touched her dreadlocks. "Don't touch my hair!" Sarafina said. "I just wanted to know what they felt like," Elizabeth said. "So? That doesn't mean you can touch me," Sarafina replied. "Relax!" Elizabeth said. "Quiet down, Sarafina, and sit down, Elizabeth," Ms. Parker said. "She touched my hair," Sarafina said angrily. Ms. Parker looked down and ignored her.

"Stupid ass teachers!" mumbled Sarafina under her breath. "What did you say?" Ms. Parker asked. Sarafina looked down. "Seriously, WHAT did you say?" said Ms. Parker raising her voice. Sarafina rolled her eyes. "You need to learn to control your anger. You are overreacting. Why are you so sensitive about your hair?" Sarafina screamed, "BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO TOUCH IT." "Ok, I'm calling your mom," Ms. Parker said. "Go ahead," said Sarafina as she took a deep breath in an attempt to calm herself down. Ms. Parker called Ms. Smith, Sarafina's mom to inform her about the incident. While on the phone, Ms. Smith said to Ms. Parker, "I'm so tired of you racist teachers. I'm so over this. I'm at my job and you're calling me with this nonsense. Do I need to come up there?!" Ms. Parker yelled back to Ms. Smith, "Go ahead. Do it! I dare you!" After she hung up the phone, Ms. Parker said to Sarafina, "I see where you get it."

Later that day, Ms. Ortiz, the social worker, entered the cafeteria to grab a salad and noticed Sarafina was sitting alone at lunch. She asked Sarafina if she wanted to eat lunch in her office. Sarafina quickly responded, "Yes, ma'am. Thank you." She grabbed her tray to follow Ms. Ortiz to her office. Sarafina began to share with Ms. Ortiz some of her recent frustrations with her teachers and her peers. As they were eating their lunches and talking, Ms. Parker stuck her head in Ms. Ortiz's office to share the latest gossip about the 7th-grade basketball coach when she noticed it was Sarafina sitting there. She said, "What did you do now?" Sarafina instantly felt a rush of frustration come over her and slammed her fist on Ms. Ortiz's desk. This caused a picture frame to fall on the floor and break. This was a picture frame given to Ms. Ortiz by her grandmother who had

recently passed away. Ms. Ortiz's eyes began to well up with tears, so she took a long drink of cold water to bring her back to the present. Ms. Parker said, "Uh ... I'll come back later," and walked away. Ms. Ortiz walked around her desk and shut the door.

"I'm sooo sorry," pleaded Sarafina as if Ms. Ortiz would not believe her. Ms. Ortiz took a deep breath and they both began to pick up the pieces of glass and place them in the trashcan. "I'll buy you a new one. My mom has some really nice picture frames. I'll bring you one." Ms. Ortiz was quiet as she continued to take deep breaths. She then explained that she was feeling sad because the picture frame that broke was from someone special and she needed a moment to feel her sadness. After a few minutes of silence, Ms. Ortiz asked Sarafina what that exchange with Ms. Parker was about and Sarafina explained what happened earlier in the day. Ms. Ortiz focused on Sarafina's story and expressed empathy about how she was feeling, even though she was feeling sad herself. Sarafina shared that her mom was the most important person in her life, and it was hurtful that Ms. Parker was so disrespectful to her mom. Ms. Ortiz shared with Sarafina that she had been very close with her grandmother, who had raised her, and that she had recently passed away. Sarafina had never seen a teacher cry at school before. Ms. Ortiz and Sarafina also talked about the ways that racism has shown up in their lives and how it has impacted both of them in different ways. They were interrupted by the lunch bell. "Sarafina, you need to get to class. Thank you for eating lunch with me. Let me know how I can support you," Ms. Ortiz said. Sarafina smiled as she rushed out of her office.

After hearing Sarafina's story, Ms. Ortiz reflected on how policies at the school might be unfairly targeting some students and wondered what she could do to problem-solve the issue. She also jotted down some notes on ways to approach Ms. Ramirez about how she is applying the school's dress code policy to the expectations in PE class. She knows she needs to have a critical conversation about equity, but she also needs to approach it in the right way. That evening, Ms. Ortiz added Sarafina to her gratitude journal. Although sad about the broken picture frame, she was grateful for her conversation with Sarafina. The insight Sarafina provided about her experiences helped Ms. Ortiz learn and reflect on her own bias and consider new perspectives on ways to make her school a better place.

Part 2:

The next morning, Ms. Smith, Sarafina's mother, reluctantly showed up early at the office during student drop-off hours. She was greeted by Ms. Wright, the administrative assistant who said, "Good morning, can I help you, ma'am?" Ms. Smith replied, "Good morning. I'd like to talk to the principal about my daughter, Sarafina." Just as Ms. Wright was reporting that Mr. Washington was out of the building for the day, Ms. Ortiz walked through the office and realized it was Sarafina's mom. "Ms. Smith, I'm Ms. Ortiz and I spoke with your daughter in my office yesterday. I have a few minutes this morning. Would you like to chat in my office?"

Ms. Smith and Ms. Ortiz were able to discuss how Sarafina has adjusted to entering middle school and how the events over the last few weeks have affected Sarafina. Ms. Smith shared, "Sarafina has always been a strong student. She especially loved math until this year. This year she feels invisible. When there is a problem, she feels like teachers don't want her in their class." Ms. Ortiz listened carefully to what Ms. Smith said. At the end of the conversation, Ms. Ortiz said, "I'm so glad you came in and I appreciate your willingness to share. I'm sorry that I don't have more time to talk to you about this today, but it is important to me, and I want to continue our conversation." Ms. Smith agreed to a phone call the next day.

During the phone call the next day, Ms. Ortiz invited Ms. Smith to join the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Two years ago, the school started a PAC to provide advice and assistance to school

leadership on various topics. At first, Ms. Smith hesitated, “I don’t have a lot of extra time and I don’t know anything about school policy.” Ms. Ortiz replied, “We provide options to participate in meetings—either in person or virtually. Each meeting is recorded so you can watch them at your convenience. You can share your perspective through surveys. As a member, you get a vote in making changes. You may not know much about making policy. What you can share, and what will be very valuable as policy is formed, is how a particular policy might impact you, your daughter, and other family members based on your lived experiences. Your perspective on such things will be extremely valuable in making our school a better place.” Although hesitant, Ms. Smith agreed to join the PAC.

For the next several days, Ms. Ortiz continued to think about Ms. Smith’s words, “She feels invisible.” She wondered what school is like for a student who feels invisible. What needs to happen to change that?

After much reflection on her conversation with Ms. Smith, Ms. Ortiz explained to the 6th-grade team of teachers her concerns about how different policies and expectations affect different students in different ways. To illustrate her concern, she shared some examples in a team meeting of how teachers’ bias or interpretation of policies might create differential treatment.

Mr. Easton, who teaches 6th-grade English, was in the group, along with Ms. Ramirez, the PE teacher. Ms. Ortiz gave short scenarios. Ms. Ramirez, like many of her colleagues, appeared fidgety and quiet, but when everyone was asked to share with a partner, Ms. Ramirez recognized and described how her rules for PE class might be biased toward some students. The activity during the team meeting gave Mr. Easton an idea for a lesson plan on empathy and perspective-taking in his English class.

Mr. Easton began planning his lesson during his next prep. He selected one of the state standards: Determine an author’s perspective or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses language to advance that perspective or purpose. The goal of his classroom activities was to focus on a skill (i.e., determining the author’s perspective, empathy, perspective-taking) but he did not want to restrict students to a medium or a particular topic. He emailed his colleagues to ask for various types of resources (podcasts, articles, songs, media clips, and so on) related to perspective-taking that could be related to adolescent identity, equity, and social justice. He knew that some of his colleagues were having difficulty recognizing and respecting differences in perspectives and hoped that including insight from those colleagues might bring them into the conversation.

Mr. Gray, the assistant principal, was copied on Mr. Easton’s email to the staff asking for resource ideas for his lesson. Since he started his tenure as the assistant principal 3 years ago, Mr. Gray had been carving out time in staff meetings and professional learning for teachers to share their successes with instructional practices and relationship-building strategies. Mr. Gray asked Mr. Easton to share his lesson and comprehensive list of resources with the staff during their next meeting later in the week. Mr. Easton gladly accepted.

Mr. Easton had students work in small groups to choose 2–3 different types of resources about a topic of their choice and to prepare a presentation about the authors’ perspectives. Sarafina’s group shared the short film *Hair Love*, an article about a school that said a Black student’s dreadlocks were against its dress code, and a *Teen Vogue* article on the history of Black hair discrimination. During the lesson, Sarafina felt encouraged as students shared their own lived experiences and reflected on the ways the discussion influenced their perspectives.

In preparation for sharing this lesson plan with his colleagues, Mr. Easton asked his students for their help. Together, they brainstormed short scenarios and discussion questions for the staff

meeting based on the various topics and perspectives students talked about when studying their selected resources in class. In fact, Mr. Easton ultimately invited the students to directly share their questions and scenarios with his colleagues, which proved to be an effective approach.

The students were so excited about their involvement in the staff meeting that they asked Mr. Easton if they could also create a student survey for the whole school asking questions about ways students might be affected by school rules and expectations. Ms. Ortiz collaborated with Mr. Easton to support the students in this effort. She also helped them organize a town hall discussion that included parents and community members to share the results of the survey.

A portion of the scenario was adapted from Gibson & Decker (2019).

Personal SEL Reflection

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Purpose: This tool is designed for self-reflection. It should not be used to evaluate performance. Principals, administrators, social emotional learning (SEL) team members, staff members, and other adults can use it to assess personal strengths, think about how to model those strengths when interacting with others, and plan strategies to promote growth across areas of social competence. If used in a group setting, individuals should first complete the reflection privately, then discuss general themes and examples of strengths and challenges with partners or in small groups. Individuals can return to this reflection throughout the year to revisit personal goals and mark progress.

Directions:

- Read each statement and think of related specific situations, then rate yourself on how easy or difficult it is for you to perform the skill by marking the appropriate box (very difficult, difficult, easy, or very easy for you to do).
- When you finish, search for patterns of strengths and challenges. This information is for you, so answer accurately without judging responses as “good” or “not good.”
- When you have time, review your responses and take action in light of what you learn. Suggested writing prompts and actions can be found after the reflection statements.

Self-Awareness		Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS	I can identify and name my emotions at the moment.				
	I can use self-reflection to understand the factors that contribute to my emotions and how my emotions impact me.				
	I can recognize when my emotions, thoughts, and biases influence my behavior and my reactions to people and situations, both negatively and positively.				
IDENTITY AND SELF KNOWLEDGE	I can recognize and am able to be realistic about my strengths and limitations.				
	I can recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity is shaped by other people and my ethnicity, culture, experiences, and environments.				
	I can recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity shapes my views, biases, and prejudices.				
GROWTH MINDSET AND PURPOSE	I believe I can continue to learn and develop skills to better myself.				
	I believe I can continue to learn and develop my skills to better support all young people to succeed.				
	I can see how I have a valuable role in my work, my family, and my community.				

Self-Management		Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
MANAGING EMOTIONS	I can find ways to manage strong emotions in ways that don't negatively impact others.				
	I can get through something even when I feel frustrated.				
	I can calm myself when I feel stressed or nervous.				
MOTIVATION, AGENCY, AND GOAL-SETTING	I can motivate myself to seek self-improvement and encourage growth in those I lead.				
	I can take action and impact change on issues that are important to me and the larger community.				
	I can set measurable, challenging, and attainable goals and have clear steps in place to reach them.				
PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION	I can modify my plans in the face of new information and realities.				
	When juggling multiple demands, I can use strategies to regain focus and energy.				
	I can balance my work life with personal renewal time.				

Social Awareness		Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
EMPATHY AND COMPASSION	I can seek to understand a person's perspective and feelings.				
	I can pay attention to the feelings of others and recognize how my words and behavior impact them.				
	I show care for others when I see that they have been harmed in some way.				
PERSPECTIVE TAKING	I can work to learn about the experiences of people of different identities, including different ethnicities, religions, sexual identities.				
	I can learn from those who have different opinions than me.				
	I can ask others about their experience & perspective before offering my version of events.				
UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CONTEXT	I can understand and explain the systemic, historical, and organizational forces that create barriers for particular groups of people.				
	I honor and celebrate the cultural differences within my school community/workplace.				
	I can recognize and articulate the strengths of young people and their families and view them as partners.				

Responsible Decision-Making		Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
PROBLEM ANALYSIS	I can gather relevant information to explore the root causes of problems identified within our school community.				
	I can recognize the need to continually grow, to examine the status quo, and to encourage new thinking in our school community.				
	I can involve others who are impacted*, especially those who are historically underrepresented in decision-making, to explore a problem collaboratively before choosing a solution or launching a new project.				
IDENTIFYING SOLUTIONS	I can involve others who are impacted*, especially those who are historically underrepresented in decision-making, to generate multiple solutions and predict the outcome of each solution to key problems.				
	I can find practical and respectful ways to overcome difficulty, even when it comes to making decisions that may not be popular.				
	I can consider how my choices will be viewed through the lens of the young people I serve and the community around them.				
REFLECTION ON IMPACT	I can take time for self-reflection & group reflection on progress toward goals & the process used.				
	I can consider how my personal and professional decisions impact the lives of others.				
	I can help to make my personal and professional community a better place.				

Relationship Skills		Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
COMMUNICATION	I can stay focused when listening to others and carefully consider their meaning.				
	I can articulate ideas that are important to me in ways that engage others.				
	I can have open conversations about race and racism with young people, their families, and other community members.				
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND TEAMWORK	I can effectively bridge across cultures to meaningfully connect with young people, their families, colleagues, and community members who are from a different culture than I am (e.g. ethnicity, religion, socio-economic).				
	I can get to know the people around me.				
	I can work well with others and generate a collegial atmosphere.				
	I can make sure everyone has had an opportunity to share their ideas.				
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	When I am upset with someone, I can listen to their perspective and talk to them about how I feel.				
	I can openly admit my mistakes to myself and others and work to make things right.				
	I can work through my discomfort when dealing with conflict, listen to feelings from all parties, and help them understand different perspectives.				

*Such as staff and colleagues, young people, their families, and other community members

Review your responses and take action in light of what you learned.

1. Reflect on your responses and any insight you have gained about your ongoing process of social and emotional development.

If you consider that statements marked as “easy” or “very easy” could be areas of personal strength:

- How do these strengths affect your interactions with young people and peers?
- What competencies do your strengths relate to?
- Which of your strengths do you believe help you to achieve personal and collective goals?
- Which are you most proud of?

If you consider that statements marked as “difficult” or “very difficult” could be current areas of challenge:

- How might enhancing this area benefit your interactions with young people and peers?
- What competencies do your challenges relate to?
- Select one or two areas you believe would help you make progress toward personal and collective goals.

- Develop a strategy to remind yourself to practice this new behavior or bring it up as something to work on with a mentor or a coach.

When looking at your responses, were there things that surprised you? Were there things that confirmed what you already know about yourself?

2. Move from awareness to action.

Either individually, with a small group of peers/colleagues, or as a full school community, think about/discuss and list ways that you can activate and model social and emotional competencies throughout the day.

- For a structured all-staff activity, try these other CASEL tools: [Modeling SEL Interactions with Students and Families](#) or the [Group Reflection Protocol for SEL](#).

Consider what you and your peers/colleagues need to grow.

- Which areas or statements were frequently mentioned as a challenge?
- What kinds of learning experiences, supports, or changes to structures or environments could help address challenges?
- In what ways can you (and your small group or school community) stay motivated and accountable to continue growing and reflecting on your social and emotional competencies?



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