



**Supporting Health and Wellbeing: Utilizing
Social-Emotional Learning
in the After Schools Program**
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Nebraska
HEALTHY SCHOOLS
PROGRAM



OBJECTIVES



BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Discuss how social-emotional learning can help improve attitude and behaviors in the out of school program.



IDENTIFY THE OPPORTUNITY

How can we create positive experiences in the after school setting to support students who have experienced adversity?



LEARN NEW PRACTICES

Utilize a calming cart or calming corner as a way to help students regulate their emotions.



If a child can do advanced math, speak 3 languages, or receive top grades, but can't manage their emotions, practice conflict resolution, or handle stress, none of that other stuff is really going to matter.



Definition of SEL

Social and Emotional Climate refers to the psychosocial aspects of students' educational experience that influence their social and emotional development. The social and emotional climate of a school can impact student engagement in school activities; relationships with other students, staff, family, and community; and academic performance.

A positive social and emotional climate is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Such climates promote health, growth, and development of the whole child by providing a safe and supportive learning environment.

SEL Framework

Which skills do you see students struggling to

“Survival and emotional data have priority over cognitive processing.”

-Dr. David Sousa, Midwest Brain and Learning Institute, 2001



Instruction & Classroom Climate
Schoolwide Culture, Practices & Policies
Authentic Partnerships
Aligned Learning Opportunities

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YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

BY THE NUMBERS



1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have, a serious mental illness.

Suicide is the **3rd** leading cause of death in youth ages 10-24.



90% of those who die by suicide have an underlying mental illness.

50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.

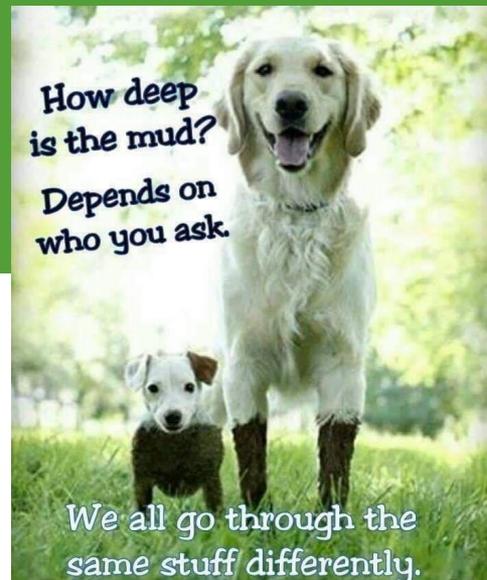


Appx. **50%** of students age 14 or older with a mental illness **drop out of high school.**



Summary: ACEs, Trauma, & Toxic Stress

*It is important to note that individuals respond differently to different events. It is their perception, psychological, and physiological reaction to the event that determines an experience of toxic stress or trauma.



Promoting SEL in the Afterschool Program

Benefits

Improved Academic performance

SEL skills last years after the programming ends

Improving self-confidence and a positive attitude toward school

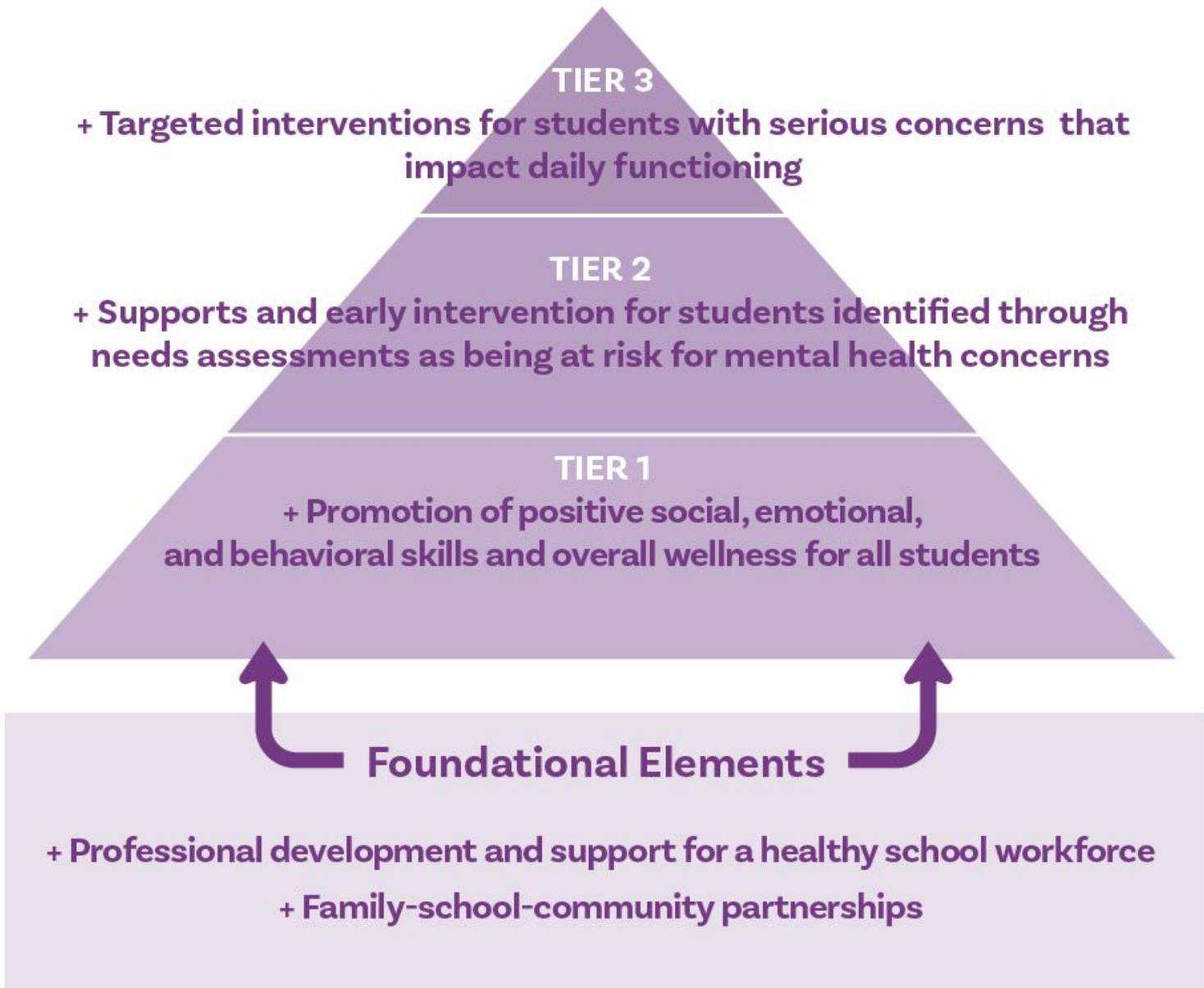
Reduces

Teen pregnancy

Alcohol and Drug use and other risk behaviors.

21st Century Skills Employers are seeking:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Critical Thinking
- Cognitive Flexibility



Key Trauma-informed SEL Practices



Create predictable routines



Build strong & supportive relationships



Empower students' agency



Support the development of self-regulation skills



Provide opportunities to explore individual and community identities

Supporting students' resilience through SEL practices

How do you see your program supporting SEL currently?

Implementing a Calming Cart/Corner

Objective:

To provide children with a space where they will feel safe recognizing and regulating their emotions in a healthy way.

- Self-awareness and emotion regulation, such as calm down carts/corners help children by giving them a safe space to practice identifying feelings and emotions to better manage stress, self-regulate, and control impulses.
- Having a set space available to support them emotionally and physically helps them feel safe and supported



Tips for Implementing a Calming Cart/Corner

Relationship Skills-

- Calming safe spaces such as a designated calm down corner help children practice mindfulness and develop skills they need to identify their emotions and communicate them when necessary.
- Being able identified one's emotions and feelings before they are problematic as well as having positive ways to manage these emotions is a beneficial life-long skill.





How To Create A Calm Down Cart




Children's
HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER

**COMMUNITY HEALTH
& ADVOCACY**

STEP 1: LISTEN TO MY BODY AND MIND TO KNOW WHEN I NEED A CALM DOWN BREAK

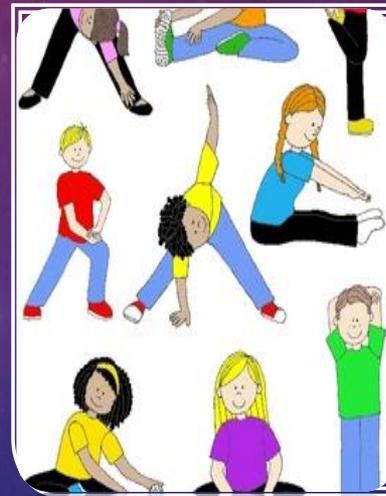


**STEP 2:
WALK CALMLY
AND QUICKLY
TO THE CALM
DOWN
CORNER AND
SET A TIMER
FOR 5
MINUTES**



STEP 3: CHOOSE A CALM DOWN ACTIVITY

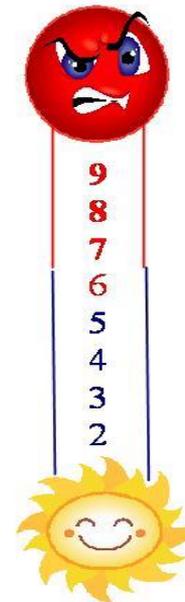
- Do belly breathing and think about my favorite place
- S-T-R-E-T-C-H
- Count in my head to 10





**STEP 4:
PICK AN
ACTIVITY TO
HELP ME
FOCUS AND
FEEL BETTER.**

**STEP 5:
CHECK IN ON MY
FEELINGS. AM I
CALM OR DO I
NEED MORE
TIME? IF I NEED
MORE TIME, I
CAN TALK TO A
GROWN UP**



- 10 Exploding – out of control
- 9 Ready to explode
- 8 Boiling
- 7 Heating up
- 6 Annoyed
- 5 Frustrated
- 4 Okay
- 3 Cool and collected
- 2 Relaxed and happy
- 1 Couldn't be better





**STEP 6:
I'M CALM
AND READY
TO PUT THE
ACTIVITIES
AWAY AND
JOIN MY
FRIENDS!**

Taking care of yourself when supporting your students

Secondary traumatic stress can occur when working with children who have experienced trauma. Additionally, being aware of your own experiences and exposures to ACEs is important. Self-care is essential in order to model healthy emotion regulation and behavior skills.

Self-care strategies

- Prioritize finding support to help you work through your own experiences, if and when you need it.
- [Set boundaries](#) and check in with yourself to process your feelings.
- Rely on your colleagues to take a break when you need to using the “[tap-in/tap-out](#)” strategy.
- Use this [self-care worksheet](#) to help care for yourself.
- Prioritize your emotions and safety and create your own list of go-to self-care strategies to quickly reference when you need it most.

Find more tips and resources on self-care for educators [here](#).

Healthy schools require a positive school climate that supports the social and emotional development of students and adults. A positive school climate creates the conditions for SEL; the social and emotional competence of each member of the school community, both individually and collectively, affects school climate.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2018

REFLECTION

Is your school or district supporting building-wide SEL practices that you can connect with?

What is one takeaway you have after learning more about the benefits of SEL?



Additional Resources/Content

[Building SEL Skills](#)

[Out of School Time Wellness policy guide](#)

[Building Social Emotional Learning](#)

[Mindful Breathing Cards- Printable](#)

[Healthy Out of School Time Roadmap](#)





Create predictable routines

Instability often entails chaos, unpredictability, and fear. A child who has experienced trauma might feel unsure of what to expect when things change. Certain strategies and supports can help children who have experienced traumatic events adapt to transitions in the classroom a little easier so that they feel safe and ready to learn.

Strategies to try

- Establish predictability by writing out a schedule, using it consistently, and making timely announcements of changes when necessary.
- Follow through with your promises and in situations where plans must change, be transparent with your explanations.
- Practice building awareness of your own emotions and triggers and model your own self-regulation skills as you flexibly adapt to any changes in the day.



Find additional strategies for building safe and inclusive spaces in our [SEL Integration Approach](#) resource.





Build strong & supportive relationships

Strong relationships can provide the responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection that can support children who are feeling the effects of traumatic events. A study on positive childhood experiences found that having *two* non-parental adults show genuine interest in children can help offset the effects of adverse experiences, as did feeling supported by friends (Bethell et al., 2019).

Strategies to try

- Invite a positive connection from the moment students enter the classroom by standing at the door to greet them.
- Spend two minutes a day getting to know a student for ten consecutive days. Invite other colleagues in the school to get to know and connect with students in your classroom.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful, positive peer collaboration in the classroom.



Find additional resources for building relationships in our series, "[Fostering Strong Relationships in Schools](#)."





Empower students' agency

Help students feel seen, heard, and empowered. Find ways to support their goals and efforts to build their self-efficacy and exercise their agency.

Traumatic events can remove a child's control over a situation. Their choices may have been diminished and they might feel powerless. Acknowledge students' capacity and resilience, and celebrate how resourceful they are. Be responsive to your students' needs and encourage their belief in their ability to impact their worlds in a positive way.

Strategies to try

- Offer opportunities for students to set and track their own goals.
- Collaborate with your students to help them problem-solve through challenges in the classroom. For example, help students create if-then plans to prepare for upcoming projects or anticipate how to navigate challenges.
- Build appropriate choices into ongoing lessons and activities.



Find additional strategies for supporting students in our [Self-Efficacy Toolkit](#) and [Agency](#) resources.





Support the development of self-regulation skills

Provide opportunities for students to develop and practice emotional self-regulation skills. It's also important to practice developing and using your own self-regulation skills! Actively building these skills can help youth cope with, adapt to, and offset effects of adversities.

Strategies to try

- Help students develop emotional awareness and monitoring by using the Mood Meter as a tool to check in with their emotions throughout the day.
- Incorporate “grounding” and deep breathing as helpful tools for students (and teachers) to acknowledge and navigate their own emotions.
- Model the use of these and other self-regulation strategies yourself throughout the day.



Find additional resources and strategies in our [Self-Management](#) and [Mindfulness](#) toolkits.





Provide opportunities to explore individual and community identities

Help students strengthen and explore their own identities and the perspectives of others through various activities that promote agency and civic engagement.

Support students' participation in their local community's traditions. This has been found to be a particularly helpful positive experience for people who have experienced adversity.

Strategies to try

- Provide students with opportunities to reflect on identity and equity to build self-awareness.
- Enhance students' relationship skills by supporting them in discussing issues that matter to them, building relationships and collaborating with diverse team members, and engaging in constructive conflict negotiation.
- Use current topics to foster social awareness culminating in a special project based in the local community.

Source: Simmons (2019).



Find additional resources and strategies in our [Social Awareness Toolkit](#).



Middle School Video- Empathy

Contact

To access other toolkits, newsletter, or downloadable papers, visit us at: transformingeducation.org

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Additional Resources

Learn More About Trauma & Toxic Stress

- [National Childhood Traumatic Stress Network \(NCTSN\)](#)
- [Child Mind Institute's How Trauma Affects Kids in Schools](#)
- Harvard's Center on the Developing Child's [Guides to Toxic Stress & Resilience](#)
- [Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom](#)

Guidance & More Strategies for Schools and Classrooms

- [Colorín Colorado's Using a Strengths-Based Approach to Support Students Living with Trauma, Violence, and Chronic Stress](#)
- [Turnaround for Children's Vision for School and Student Success](#)
- [Edutopia's Getting Started with Trauma-Informed Practices](#)
- [Helping Traumatized Children Learn: Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools](#)
- [Trauma Responsive Educational Practices Project](#)
- [Dos and Don'ts of a Trauma-Informed Compassionate Classroom](#)
- ["What do I do?" Trauma-Informed Support for Children](#)

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