**Modeling SEL for Young People**

Modeling SEL offers young people positive examples of how to navigate stress and frustration and maintain healthy relationships while simultaneously influencing the learning climate. You can engage staff in this activity to reflect on how you will intentionally model SEL as part of schoolwide implementation.

This activity should be used after staff have had an opportunity to engage in [foundational learning on SEL](https://schoolguide.casel.org/focus-area-1a/foundational-learning/). This activity may also be combined with a process for developing [Shared Staff Agreements](https://schoolguide.casel.org/resource/creating-shared-agreements-ost/), or for engaging staff in [Reflecting on Personal SEL Skills](https://schoolguide.casel.org/resource/adult-sel-self-assessment-ost/). While this activity is targeted around modeling SEL for young people, it can be adapted or expanded to include considerations for how staff will model SEL in their interactions with other staff, families, school partners, etc.

*Time:* 45 minutes

*Materials and preparation*: Poster/chart paper, markers, and handout: CASEL’s SEL Framework (Download at <https://casel.org/sel-framework/>). Write each of the five social and emotional competencies on large poster paper and hang them up around the room.

1. Welcome staff and ask them to reflect on the quote: “Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them (James Baldwin in “Fifth Avenue, Uptown” published in Esquire, July 1960).” Ask staff to find a partner and share what this quote means to them and how it relates to promoting SEL for young people.
2. Review each of the [five core social and emotional competencies](https://casel.org/sel-framework/) and [how they connect to youth outcomes and lifelong success](https://schoolguide.casel.org/resource/the-case-for-sel/). Prompt staff to think about how young people learn these competencies in many ways – through classroom lessons, through afterschool groups, and by “imitating” the way that adults model these competencies. Ask staff to do 1-minute free write to reflect on one way they demonstrated a social and emotional competency when interacting with young people in the previous week.
3. Divide staff into five groups and assign each group to one of the SEL competency posters (i.e. “Self-Awareness,” “Self-Management”, “Social Awareness”, “Relationship Skills”, “Responsible Decision-Making”.) Give staff 5 minutes at their poster to collectively brainstorm how staff can model this competency in their interactions with young people. As they brainstorm, a notetaker in each group should record their ideas on the poster paper. After five minutes, ask the group to move to the next poster, read what the previous group has written, then add on to the existing ideas. Rotate until each group has gone to every poster.
4. Provide an opportunity for staff to do a “gallery walk” around all five posters.
5. After staff return to their seats, ask them to write on a post-it one specific way they will model SEL in their interactions with young people in the coming week. Ask staff to share what they wrote in small groups, then close out the activity.
6. After this activity, your SEL team can synthesize and type up the ideas to create printed posters or one-pagers that can be distributed to all staff, used in team meetings, and/or hung in classrooms. You can use the template on p.2 to create this. Below the template, you’ll find additional examples of how staff might model each of the competencies.

**Blank Template:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SEL Competency** | **How will we model this competency in our interactions with young people?** |
| **Self-Awareness** |  |
| **Self-Management** | *
 |
| **Social Awareness** |  |
| **Relationships Skills** |  |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | *
 |

**Sample Completed Template:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SEL Competency** | **Modeling examples for staff** |
| **Self-Awareness** | * Identify and name emotions in the moment: “I feel \_\_\_ when things like this happen.”
* Ask young people for feedback on your instructional practices.
* Admit mistakes and say how you’ll make things right: “I’m sorry I was in such a rush that I forgot to greet you this morning. If you have a few minutes after class or our program session, I’d love to hear how your baseball game went yesterday.”
* Notice and communicate that you value the personal, cultural and linguistic assets young people possess and bring with them into the space.
* Identify and discuss your strengths and limitations.
* Reflect on your own cultural lens and identify biases that may exist as a result of that lens.
* Build awareness of how your emotions impact young people.
* Notice events and ideas and how your body responds to them.
* Notice personal behaviors, tone of voice, and personal affect that arise with various emotions/situations.
* Demonstrate a growth mindset by describing your own process of continuous improvement or overcoming a challenge.
 |
| **Self-Management** | * Discuss how you set and plan to achieve personal goals and how you improve your own practice. (“My teaching goal this year is to design lessons that let you have more opportunities to collaborate with one another. Will you help me brainstorm how I can reach this goal?”)
* Demonstrate self-regulating and calming strategies in age-appropriate ways (“I’m feeling a little frustrated, so I’m going to stop and take a breath before I decide what to do next.”)
* Acknowledge events that cause stress in the lives of young people and in the community, and model practices for processing and managing stress.
* Ask young people for help when appropriate
* Approach new or unexpected situations as learning opportunities.
* Use and return materials and equipment with care.
* Model respectful and restorative language when addressing challenges with young people.
* Make space for and encourage young people to take action on issues that are important to them and to make choices in their learning so that their work aligns with their interests and skills.
 |
| **Social Awareness** | * Consider young people’s perspectives and understand that everyone has their own set of truths and beliefs based on their own experiences.
* Actively support the school community’s mission and goals.
* Model upstanding behaviors.
* Be willing to compromise.
* Ask young people about their experience and perspective first, rather than beginning with your version of events.
* Model appreciation and acceptance of others’ beliefs and cultural differences.
* Reflect and admit when you have treated others unfairly.
* Treat families and community organizations as partners who can support your work with young people.
 |
| **Relationships Skills** | * Greet young people by name daily.
* Build a connection with someone with whom you do not normally interact.
* Take time to reflect on potential outcomes before responding to challenging youth.
* Allow young people to get to know you within your individual comfort level and appropriate boundaries.
* Get to know youth within your individual comfort level and appropriate boundaries.
* Be willing to give and receive constructive feedback from young people.
* Model fairness, respect, and appreciation for others.
* Provide opportunities for young people to work together and give specific praise for strong teamwork and collaboration.
* Acknowledge the efforts of others with encouragement and affirmation.
* Intervene when you hear language that is racist, sexist, ableist, or homophobic, or when you see a young person being targeted by peers.
 |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | * Model problem-solving strategies, like gathering all relevant information before drawing a conclusion.
* Transparently incorporate the suggestions and perspectives of young people when making decisions that impact the program and make decisions collectively when appropriate.
* Consider legal and ethical obligations before making decisions.
* Place the needs of young people ahead of personal and political interests.
* Consider how your choices will be viewed through the lens of young people.
 |