

SEL Exercises for School & Home

To be successful this school year, students need to be able to manage their emotions, set goals, develop relationships, and make responsible decisions to keep themselves and loved ones safe.

These adaptable, bite-sized SEL lessons, called “kernels”, were developed by the EASEL Lab at Harvard with in-school and at-home versions.

SEL KERNEL

AT SCHOOL

IN VIRTUAL LEARNING

Feelings Circle

Goal:
Providing children with a routine opportunity to share their feelings.



Gather students in a circle and give each student the opportunity to share how they're feeling.



Create the order for sharing – assign each student a number and have them share in numerical order.

Human Scavenger Hunt

Goal:
Learning about and getting to know each other in the context of a fun, low-pressure game.



Hand out the Human Scavenger Hunt worksheet, and have students wander around the room to find classmates for whom the listed facts or characteristics are true.



Have each student write 1-2 fun facts about themselves and send them to you via email. Compile all of the fun facts (de-identified) in one document and share this with the class. The class can go through the list together, discussing and guessing who the student is for each fact.

SEL KERNEL

Magic 8-Ball

Goal:
Predicting future consequences tied to hypothetical actions.



Steps to Success

Goal:
Providing students with the opportunity to outline the steps required to reach a goal.



AT SCHOOL

Present an action or scenario. Ask the students, “If (character) does X, what might happen?” Have students look into their magic 8-ball and give potential consequences of the action. After hearing a few student responses, ask students, “What might happen next?” Have students volunteer to share what will happen next based on the prior response.



Have students fill out a steps to success worksheet with a goal they want to reach. Encourage students to include a timeframe for each step (end of day, week, etc.).



When a step is completed, they can put a check in the check box.

At the end of the process, discuss with the student how it went, and what their next goal could be, considering what went well and how they could improve.

IN VIRTUAL LEARNING

As a way to engage students, assign different roles to the scenarios and outcomes, and have students act them out so the class can visualize the different consequences.



Have students respond with a thumbs up, down, or side as to whether the consequence is positive, negative, or neutral.

Encourage students to use this with any part of the virtual learning process – from completing assignments (academic, extracurricular, or otherwise) to maintaining personal well-being, healthy habits, and so on.



Consider having students share “best practices” and what worked or didn’t work for them during whole-class sessions.

SEL KERNEL

Cooldown Process

Goal:

Providing students with a step-by-step process to de-escalating when experiencing high intensity emotions.



AT SCHOOL

Lead students through the step-by-step process.

- **Pause.**
- **Identify feeling.**
- **Choose something that helps you Cool Down.**
- **Go.**

Hang up the Cooldown Process poster somewhere visible in the classroom, offering it as a tool for students as needed.



IN VIRTUAL LEARNING

Screenshare the Cooldown Process visual as you review each step with the class.

If desired, have students create their own videos of what the Cooldown Process looks like for them.

Self-Talk Superhero

Goal:

Practicing using positive self-talk during challenging situations.



Explain what self-talk is (e.g., the way we speak to ourselves in our own mind). Have students share times when their self-talk helped them to do something hard.

Praise students for using positive self-talk and explain that they are already listening to their own Self-Talk Superheroes. Then have students either close their eyes and imagine their own tiny little hero on their shoulder, always ready to encourage them. Have students go around the circle and share what their Self-Talk Superhero's favorite words or phrases are.



Provide the space for students to provide affirmations/support for one another, in the case that a student is engaging in negative self-talk.

Challenge students to practice this exercise daily/weekly/biweekly on their own, and have them track their use of this practice on a calendar or checklist.