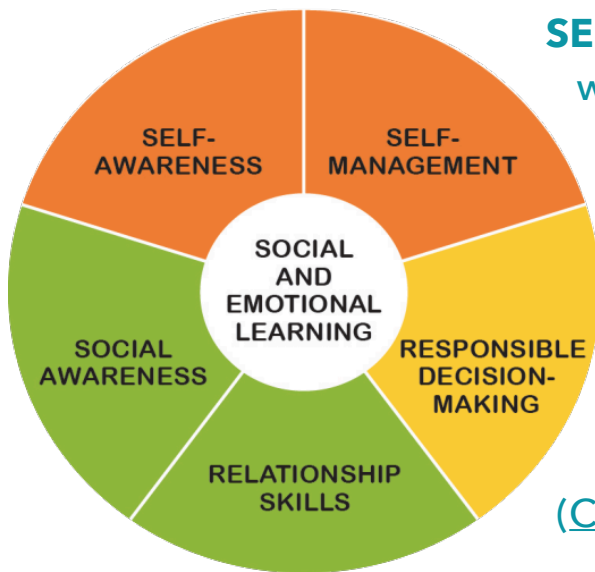


Social Emotional Learning at Home

SEL for Parents and Families



SEL is the process through which children and adults **understand and manage emotions**, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL.org)

The SEL focus this week: Self-Management Pt. 2

Last week, we talked about breathing exercises as an effective strategy to manage our emotions when practised regularly. But how do we know when we're about to go into stress mode? Try this ...

Take a moment right now and think about where in your body, you feel happy - is it in your face, around your lips and your eyes? Think about where in your body, you feel angry. Is it in your ears - do they turn red and/or burn? Or stress - is it in your shoulders or hands - do they tense up? Recognizing physical signs, especially when we feel negative emotions, helps us so we can do something to avoid melting down.

Manage our emotions by managing our thoughts...

Positive Self-Talk - say encouraging words in your head about yourself and the world around you. Ask yourself about your thought - is it a helpful or unhelpful one? Realistic self-talk may involve referring to yourself in the 3rd person. From - "I'm never going to see my friends again," to "Ellen, is that really true? Of course you will."

Use **Psychological Distancing** when you're experiencing a difficult moment. Sometimes it's easier to be kind to others and offer them advice. Try framing your own challenges as if you're supporting a friend. Say, "Well, how would I support my best friend who is telling me that they are really worried. What would I say to them?" Whatever advice you give to your friend is good advice for you to follow yourself.

Self-Compassion - interrupt your inner critic by acknowledging that suffering is a human experience. Be kind to yourself, it's ok to say, "This is really hard." When you're feeling stress in your body, use calming physical touch to relieve it.

Being able to recognize our emotions, to co-manage negative emotions with our children, to practise the strategies, models for them that we can respond rather than react. As we do this, we will build emotional stability in both them and us.

To Connect...



At the dinner table, ask your kids, "In the future, what story about this time, will you tell your kids?"



When FaceTiming with grandparents or other relatives, have your kids read a story, play a song on an instrument, or tell a favourite joke.



On Friday nights, have your kids organize a Zoom dance party with either their friends or your family friends. Pick a different theme each week.

Self Care Plans ~Source: Ricky Robertson

Self care should be a daily routine, and can be any activity that we deliberately do to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. It sounds easy but practising self care is something that we often overlook. Good self care improves mood and reduces stress. When we practise self care plans, it isn't just about doing things to relief stress, it is about building our resilience as we change the ways we respond to stress. So, what's the difference between *Stress Relief* and *Building Resilience*?



Stress relief is doing soothing activities which don't change the things that caused our stress in the first place. They include things like:

- Consuming favourite food and drink
- Watching Netflix
- Watching or playing sports
- Calling a friend to "vent"
- Shopping

Do Both:

- Exercising
- Journaling
- Meditating
- Resting

Building resilience involves things that we practise regularly that will help us change how we respond to stress. They include things like:

- Getting enough sleep
- Having a healthy diet
- Having supportive relationships
- Defining boundaries
- Engaging with a spiritual domain

Growing a Vegetable Garden with your Children

Spring is the perfect time to start a vegetable garden. This project is an opportunity for you and your child to spend time learning, exploring, de-stressing, and all the while, growing food for the family. If you've never done it before, start small with a planter box on your deck or in your yard. As you see the plants grow, imagine the conversations that you can have about how this makes you and your children feel.

For instructions to start a vegetable garden, follow www.almanac.com/vegetable-gardening-for-beginners

Incorporate **Mindfulness** practices that help you and your children become more aware of the connections between your emotions, thoughts and bodily sensations. Below are some activities to try when you're in the garden with your children:

- ▶ **Blowing on Leaves** - blow leaves off the palm of your hands. Does a maple leaf need a different breath than a pea leaf? This helps you and your child experiment with different intensities of breath.
- ▶ **Anchoring to Sounds** - listen for the subtle sounds of nature - the whistling wind or the chirping birds. Pause to tune into the sounds. How do hearing these sounds make both of you feel?
- ▶ **Mindful Eating** - once grown, snack on something from your garden. How does it feel in your hands as you pick it off the plant? How does it look or smell or taste? When you chew it, does it make a sound? If it does, is it a crunchy sound or a squishy sound?



~Adapted from Jessica Knopke, SimpleFamilies.com