

# REACH MS NEWSLETTER

*Realizing Excellence for ALL Children in Mississippi*

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

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## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCY: SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management is the second of the five core Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies discussed in the third installment of the six-part SEL newsletter series.

Self-management builds upon the knowledge and skills of self-awareness – the first core competency highlighted in the last issue of the SEL newsletter series. As with self-awareness, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines self-management in two parts. The first part involves an individual being able to self-regulate his emotions, thoughts and behaviors, and to generalize this self-regulatory ability across settings. The second part of self-management involves the ability of an individual to set goals (personal and academic) with his already attained self-regulation and to work toward achieving these goals (CASEL, 2018).

Self-management is not possible without an individual first having self-awareness. Once a person can identify emotions, recognize them in himself and others, and examine himself, he then will be able to begin self-management practices. Self-management requires one to control his impulses by thinking about safety and the wants and needs of others (ex. I really want the food on my friend's plate, but I know we would be sharing germs if I ate off her plate. Also, it is her plate of food and not mine, and I shouldn't reach over and grab things from others without asking them if I can have it). In this way, people learn to be self-disciplined, which involves generalization of self-regulatory thoughts and behaviors across settings, taking the impulse control with food at lunch in the cafeteria to supper at home or in a restaurant and with other behaviors outside of food, as well.

Paired with impulse control, stress management helps develop a self-disciplined person. Identifying situations, items, people, etc. that cause one stress is the first step in managing stress. Practicing behaviors like avoiding stressors, if possible, or techniques that calm oneself can stop negative emotions before they happen or self-regulate one's negative emotions. These techniques can be considered self-motivating techniques. For example, if I know that procrastination of a writing assignment causes me stress, I might not wait until the night before it is due to begin it. Or, for circumstances that may not be helped, I find myself short on time for completing the writing



assignment, so I write the paper before typing it with my favorite pink gel pen or reinforce myself by playing a video game after I'm finished. By using self-motivating techniques, people can effectively manage their stress levels.

Controlling impulses, managing stress, motivating oneself and having self-discipline are all components of self-management. When using organizational skills to add the ability to set goals is included, the result is a well-rounded, self-managed person. In the writing example used earlier, this could be completing a writing assignment over time by writing so many pages per day before the assignment is due or building in five-minute brain breaks or 15-minute episodes of a favorite television show after every page is written in one sit-down writing session. Self-awareness and self-management used together cause people to use knowledge about themselves and others to think before an action is made or behavior is displayed. The remaining three CASEL core competencies included in the last half of the six-part SEL newsletter series will involve one relying on these "self" pieces in interactions with others.

Self-management is broken into the following six specific skill areas: impulse control, stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting and organizational skills. In the matrix on the following page, each of these skills is aligned to one grade band/ the family. Unlike the specific skills of the previous core competency, most of these skills are equally as important across the grade bands without one skill being a prerequisite for another. The strategies listed for each grade band are directly linked to the targeted skill for those ages. These strategies can be adapted across the grade bands for intentional teaching of the targeted skill at any age.

Resources:  
• CASEL Website: [casel.org/core-competencies](http://casel.org/core-competencies)



GRADE/BAND	SKILL TARGETED	STRATEGIES
<b>Early Childhood Pre-K – 1st</b>	<b>Impulse Control</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teach the problem solving process to students. Any curriculum, purchased program or teacher-made version is fine. You can find a free printable poster at the link below that includes visuals in a four-step problem-solving process.</li> <li>2. Use solution kit cards found at the link below to provide students appropriate choices for problems that they have. For impulse control, focus on “wait and take turns,” “ask nicely,” “say please,” “get a timer,” and any others you find useful to the situation.</li> <li>3. Use the Turtle Technique to teach students how to stop and think before acting. The website below has the following free resources: a visual for the four-step process, a turtle pattern, and a social story about Tucker the Turtle. <a href="https://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html">csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html</a></li> <li>4. Provide opportunities for students to have to wait for small amounts of time (e.g., finish talking to the adult who came in the room before addressing child’s wants) and for engagement while waiting (e.g., drawing, writing, looking at a book until nap time is over).</li> <li>5. Encourage students to participate in activities that are completed over time rather than with an immediate finished project (e.g., a puzzle with many pieces, an art project with multiple steps, a block structure that is “sketched” on day 1 and built on day 2, a science experiment, planting seeds and watching them grow). <a href="https://naeyc.org/our-work/families/help-your-preschooler-gain-self-control">naeyc.org/our-work/families/help-your-preschooler-gain-self-control</a></li> </ol>
<b>Elementary 2nd – 5th</b>	<b>Stress Management</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide opportunities for students to create a feelings vocabulary. Introduce them to words that express a wide variety of stress-related emotions. Encourage them to be specific about how they’re feeling and then to share that with someone they trust like a parent or relative.</li> <li>2. Teach students to do breathing or other relaxation exercises. Take four seconds to breathe in and four seconds to breathe out. As they inhale, have them count: one . . . two . . . three . . . four and do the same as they breathe out. Repeat four to five times.</li> <li>3. Encourage students to write or draw about their thoughts and feelings and provide opportunities for them to do so. Journaling offers a place for children to release their feelings about a stressful situation.</li> <li>4. Provide students with a safe space they can go to calm down. This could be a corner in the room away from other students with a chair, some books, music, etc. to help the student take his or her mind off the stressful situation.</li> <li>5. Teach students how to do shoulder shrugs. Have them raise their shoulders as if trying to touch their ears with them and breathe in. Then, all at once, have them let their shoulders drop while breathing out. Ask if they feel the tension leaving the muscles of their neck and shoulders. Repeat three to four times. This website has great stress management resources and toolkits available for download: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yclnj4a2">tinyurl.com/yclnj4a2</a></li> </ol>
<b>Middle School 6th – 8th</b>	<b>Self-motivation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the objectives so that students understand what is expected. Students need clear objectives in order to stay motivated to persevere in their tasks.</li> <li>2. Use positive reinforcement instead of threats. Students should understand that there are consequences to their actions; however, students are more motivated by positive reinforcement than by threats. When students feel safe and supported, they are more motivated to stay on task and complete their work. Students will meet the expectations of the adults around them, so focus on can, not can’t.</li> <li>3. Use positive competition to develop student motivation. Often, students will try harder in competitive situations. Use group games to ensure that there is a friendly spirit of competition. <a href="https://teachthought.com/pedagogy/21-simple-ideas-to-improve-student-motivatio">teachthought.com/pedagogy/21-simple-ideas-to-improve-student-motivatio</a></li> <li>4. Allow students to make choices in order to enhance their motivation to complete the task or follow the classroom rules. Provide students a list of homework assignments from which they can choose. Allow students to choose their small-group members or format for a group presentation (i.e., skit, PowerPoint, poster, etc.) <a href="https://edutopia.org/blog/strategies-helping-students-motivate-themselves-larry-ferlazzo">edutopia.org/blog/strategies-helping-students-motivate-themselves-larry-ferlazzo</a></li> <li>5. Introduce tasks in a positive manner. Point out the value and usefulness of the lesson or assignment. Students may be more motivated to complete uninteresting tasks when they understand the importance of the tasks and future related tasks. Students’ understanding of the importance of the task may also motivate them to persevere to complete difficult tasks. Students then learn the reinforcement for completing a difficult task. <a href="https://erweb.com/educational-research-articles/teaching-self-motivation-to-students">erweb.com/educational-research-articles/teaching-self-motivation-to-students</a></li> </ol>
<b>High School 9th – 12th</b>	<b>Self-discipline</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teach a lesson on the THINK process to help students recognize responsible use of social media before posting an unkind or untrue remark about a person when upset: T—is it true, H—is it helpful, I—is it inspiring, N—is it necessary, K—is it kind. <a href="https://casel.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/08/SEL-in-High-School-ELA-8-20-17.pdf">casel.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/08/SEL-in-High-School-ELA-8-20-17.pdf</a></li> <li>2. Provide an opportunity over the course of several weeks for students to work on individual projects using goals they identify for themselves. Have them monitor and document their progress for several weeks. <a href="https://casel.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/08/SEL-in-High-School-ELA-8-20-17.pdf">casel.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/08/SEL-in-High-School-ELA-8-20-17.pdf</a></li> <li>3. Teach effective, age-appropriate self-management techniques (belly breathing, yoga, counting to 10, self-talk, relaxation exercises, mental rehearsal). <a href="https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Sample-Teaching-Activities-to-Support-Core-Competencies-8-20-17.pdf">casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Sample-Teaching-Activities-to-Support-Core-Competencies-8-20-17.pdf</a></li> <li>4. Have students brainstorm age-appropriate ways to motivate themselves.</li> <li>5. Lead students in an age-appropriate discussion of how to use their awareness of emotions to guide decision-making. This might mean helping students think about pausing before making a decision at all when they are feeling angry or hurt because it is better to make important decisions when feeling calm.</li> </ol>
<b>Family</b>	<b>Organizational Skills</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help children develop organizational skills by setting up expectations early to give clear guidelines of what is expected of them and their behavior both at home and out in the world. <a href="https://usm.edu/reachms/family-tools-home">usm.edu/reachms/family-tools-home</a></li> <li>2. Establish rituals and routines. These are important for children who struggle with self-management. By having a pattern of behavior that is expected, they know what to expect and get into a rhythm of behavior. <a href="https://ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/family-life/structure-routines">ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/family-life/structure-routines</a></li> <li>3. Provide a calm, comfortable space in which children can calm down. A calm environment can naturally enforce self-regulation and ease this process for them. It could be something as simple as setting an expectation of using quiet voices therefore creating a calmer atmosphere. <a href="https://positiveparentingconnection.net/chill-out-corner-a-positivetool-for-learning-emotional-self-regulation/#8230">positiveparentingconnection.net/chill-out-corner-a-positivetool-for-learning-emotional-self-regulation/#8230</a></li> <li>4. Help children learn self-regulating techniques that help them to “ride out” difficult emotions or gather themselves when they are anxious or confused. Examples of techniques are pausing, calming and visualizing, with more info here: <a href="https://slideshare.net/TransformingEducation/teaching-self-management">slideshare.net/TransformingEducation/teaching-self-management</a></li> <li>5. Help children develop an action plan (with reasonable timeframes for completion) and analyze how current decisions may impact goal achievement. Establish positive and realistic goals (both short- and long-term). Monitor progress toward goal achievement using motivational strategies and celebrating successes. <a href="https://landmarkoutreach.org/uncategorized/self-management-sel">landmarkoutreach.org/uncategorized/self-management-sel</a></li> </ol>

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