

SEL COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

BACK TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

August 2020
Vol 1 Issue 1



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The early and ongoing development of emotional vocabulary is critical so that children can learn how to name their emotions, claim them, and tame them. When children are able to verbalize their feelings, they are increasing their self-awareness and taking a step back to make choices about what to do with their feelings (self-management). This is vital right now, as our children are experiencing an assortment of emotions in our new normal, especially as they prepare to transition back to school. Check out this great resource for building emotional vocabulary [here](#).

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Children often take their cues from adults. Be mindful about how you carry yourself, especially when many routines and practices look different right now. For example, watching continuous updates on COVID-19 and engaging in polarizing discussions may increase anxiety and fear. Have a plan for your family that is focused on safety and follows appropriate guidelines set forth by credible sources. While it is certainly important to be vulnerable and authentic in front of middle school aged children, as adults we must also be intentional about modeling how we manage our emotions.

HIGH SCHOOL

In a time when the civic identity of our children is quickly evolving, identifying projects together that are safe and helpful to others can bring a sense of meaning and connection during these uncertain times. This may include writing letters of support to essential workers, sewing masks, posting positive messages on social media, volunteering at local food banks (if comfortable), etc. There are many ways to get creative and give back!

BACK TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

*by Charese Cook
SEL Program Specialist*

As summer break comes to a close and the transition back to the new school year begins, focusing on our social and emotional learning (SEL) is more important than ever.

This school year is a big transition and will look and feel different for many of us as we navigate through our new normal. To be successful, it can be helpful to plan and prepare with the social and emotional needs of students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and school staff in mind.

Whether virtual learning or in-person learning will be taking place (or a blended model of the two), having a plan is key. As humans, we naturally crave structure and connections, and desire support by others. This is particularly true of children, who look to the adults in their lives to keep them safe.

So, no matter where the learning is taking place, we must set up opportunities to foster these traits to rebuild our community and make it stronger than ever. This monthly newsletter serves to provide strategies, research, and resources to support a successful school year ahead!



USING POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS TO MANAGE TRANSITIONS AND CHALLENGES

by Kaitlin Kizer
Program Partnership Manager

During transitions and challenges, it can be helpful to use positive affirmations--such as "I can do this!"--to manage uncomfortable emotions that may arise from experiencing uncertainty. Affirmations are most commonly used by repeating intentional statements, and they help us to manage and cope with feelings such as anxiety, stress, uncertainty, and a lack of confidence. Positive affirmations can have lasting effects on the way we think and feel by shifting thinking to a positive, encouraging, and healthy mindset. They also enhance self-awareness and self-management skills by helping us tune into our emotions and our decision-making skills by putting us in a mental space where we can make positive choices.

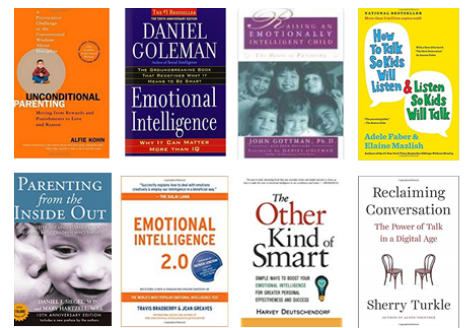
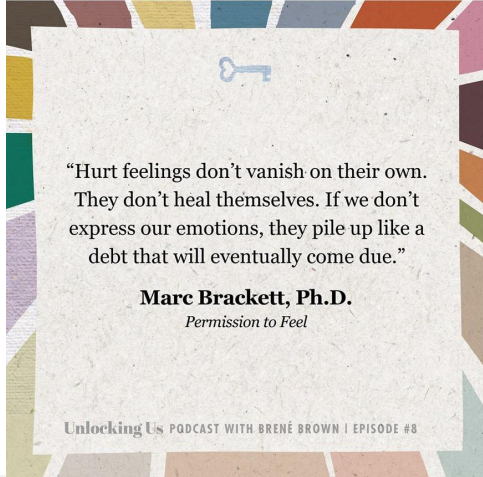
Educator and family resource:
[Affirmations for Students \(7 Mindsets\)](#)

CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

by Siomara Bridges-Mata
Community Programs Specialist

We all have navigated through very challenging moments these past few months, and some still might be going through a difficult time. It is essential that we create a welcoming environment at home and at school as we start the new school year--an environment where all children and adults are seen, heard, respected, and valued. One way we can support each other is by showing empathy and compassion:

- Be present
- Practice small acts of kindness
- Listen generously
- Express yourself and share your feelings
- Take the perspective of others and acknowledge their emotions
- Offer to help without someone asking
- Be intentional about your choice of words
- Express gratitude



RESOURCES AND READINGS

by Shea Quraishi
Chief Academic Officer

As we begin a new school year in a time of unprecedented changes, parents/guardians and educators alike can benefit from looking to the experts for guidance.


In its new "Road Map" tool, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) offers research-based practices and activities to help students and adults process recent changes and find a way forward.

Spoiler alert: researchers recommend focusing on safe, nurturing relationships before hitting the books. Establishing a firm foundation is key to making learning successful. To learn more, visit [Reunite, Renew and Thrive: SEL Roadmap for Reopening School](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



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