

# It Takes a Whole School to Support a Whole Child: Harnessing SEL to Support the Well-Being of ESPs During the COVID-19 Crisis

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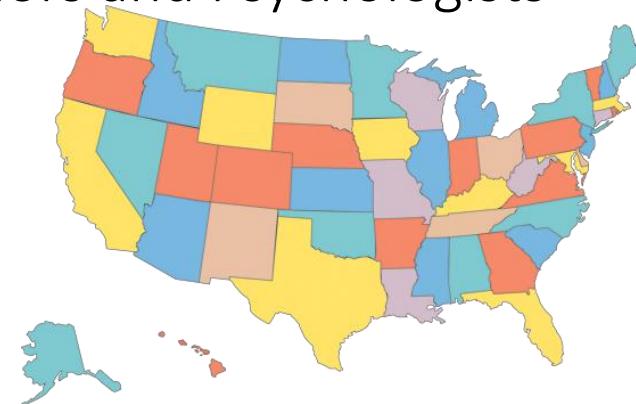
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# Today's PLC

- 60% ESPs
  - 76% Paras
  - 11% Clerical
  - Transportation, Health and Student Services, Skilled Trades, Custodial, Maintenance, Technical, Security, and Food Services
- 29% Teachers, Administrators, School Counselors and Psychologists
- 11% NEA and State Association Staff



Representation  
from EVERY state +  
a few registrants  
who are currently  
overseas!

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To educate  
~~all the whole~~ children  
we need to  
start with sel.

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# WHAT IS SEL?

An interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral **competencies that underscore the capacity to learn**, develop and maintain mutually supportive relationships, and be healthy, physically and psychologically.

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# WHAT IS SEL?

The goals of SEL programs are to cultivate the development of five competencies:

- self-awareness
- self-management
- social awareness
- relationship skills
- responsible decision-making

*[www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)*

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Use the power of **emotions** to create a **healthier**, and more **equitable** and **compassionate** society, today and for *future* generations.

Conduct **research** and **design** educational approaches that **support** people of all ages in developing **emotional intelligence** and the **skills** to **thrive** and contribute to society.

- R**ecognizing emotions in self and others
- U**nderstanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- L**abeling emotions accurately
- E**xpressing emotions appropriately
- R**egulating emotions effectively

[www.ycei.org](http://www.ycei.org)

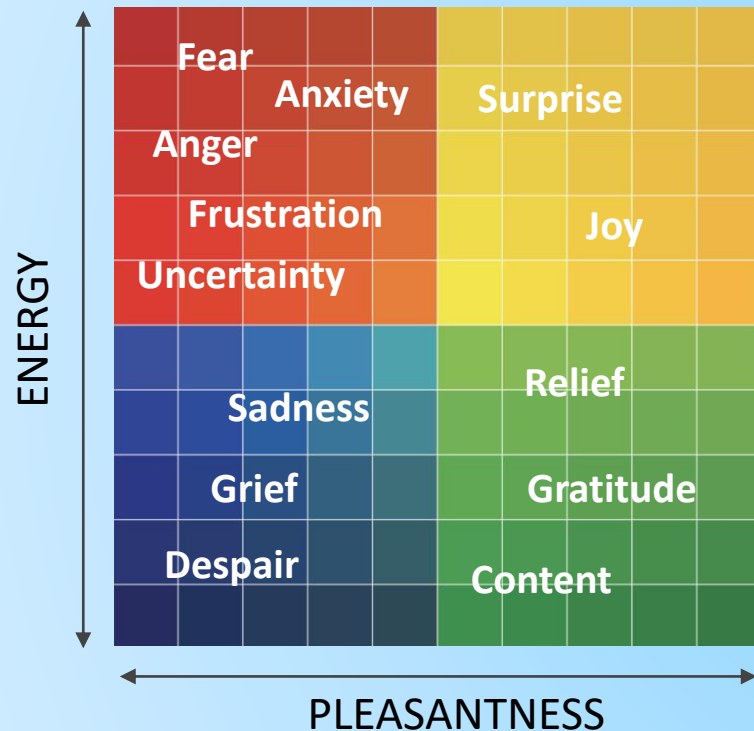
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# How are YOU feeling?



What is the one emotion word or phrase that sums up **how you are currently feeling** when you think about this school year?

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# How are YOU feeling?

“Confusion due to the fact that my school district is unclear in their guidelines for my return to work in September.

Apprehension because I want to assist in the education of my students but do not want to catch COVID or bring it home to my family.

Disappointment in not being able to go back to life the way it was before COVID. I have worked as a paraprofessional for 23 years and education today is so different. The best part of the day was interacting with students and that is gone.”

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# How are **YOU** feeling?

“I am very concerned for our students, teachers and staff.  
I am uncertain as to what our entire year will look like.  
I am sad for what is happening in our community, country and world.”

“During the current COVID-19, I feel I'm on an island. I'm an administrative specialist and I'm not involved in my usual day to day functions of dealing with students and staff. Most of the focus is on what needs to be done in the classroom. This leaves me not really understanding my role during all of this.”

“I'm proud of what I do in supporting educational staff. But this involves wearing many hats, with very often, not enough time. When I'm burnt out, looking at my role versus financial compensation, I can't help but wonder if it's worth it.”

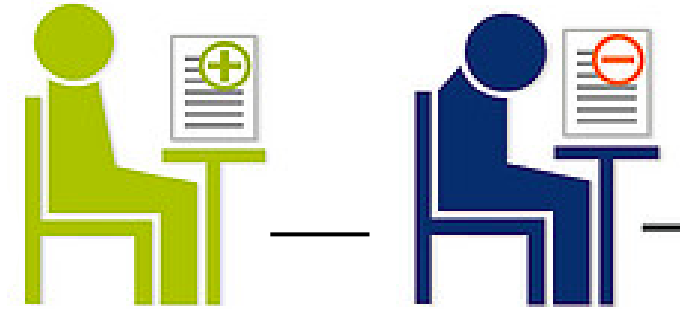
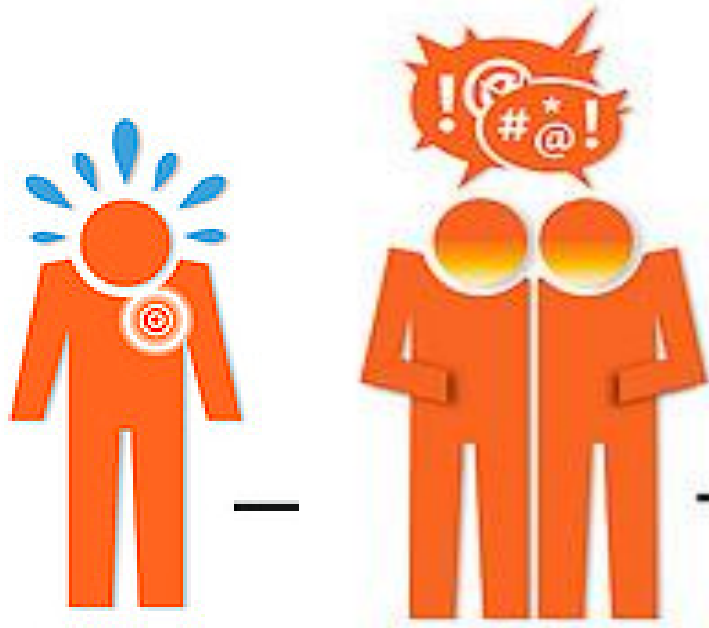
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## Health-related concerns



Anxiety anchored in  
day-to-day demands

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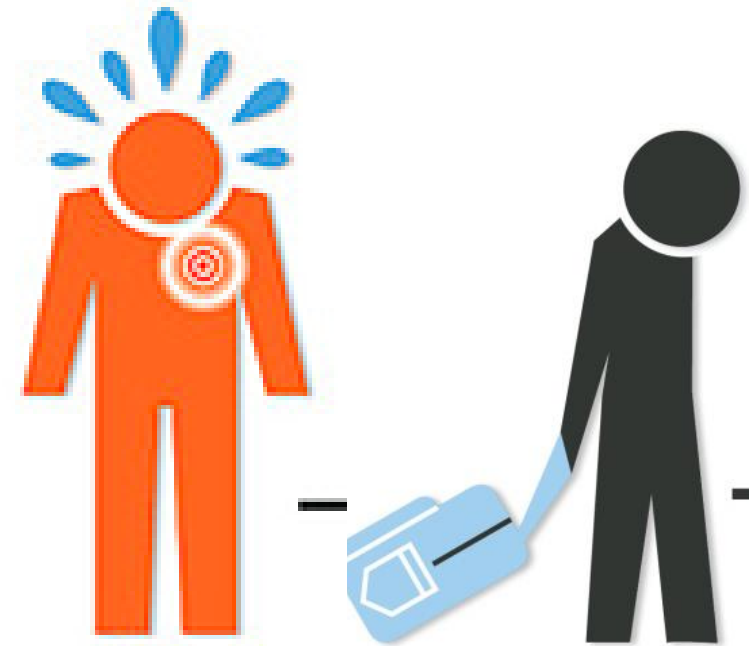
## POLL: This school year, how is your school serving/planning to serve students?

Only distance learning

Only in-person learning

Combination of distance and in-person learning

I do not know yet



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# We must prioritize SEL during the pandemic.



We cannot expect teaching, learning, and family functioning to occur in a crisis without attending to our emotions.

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# Let's anchor in hope.

What if this lived experience propels us to take action in ways that move us all towards a more inclusive school community?

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As we transition  
from **reactive** to **proactive** on our  
journey to wellness, the **compounding**  
**traumas** of this crisis call for schools to  
rethink what it means to educate the whole  
child and **invest deeply** in the whole  
**school community.**

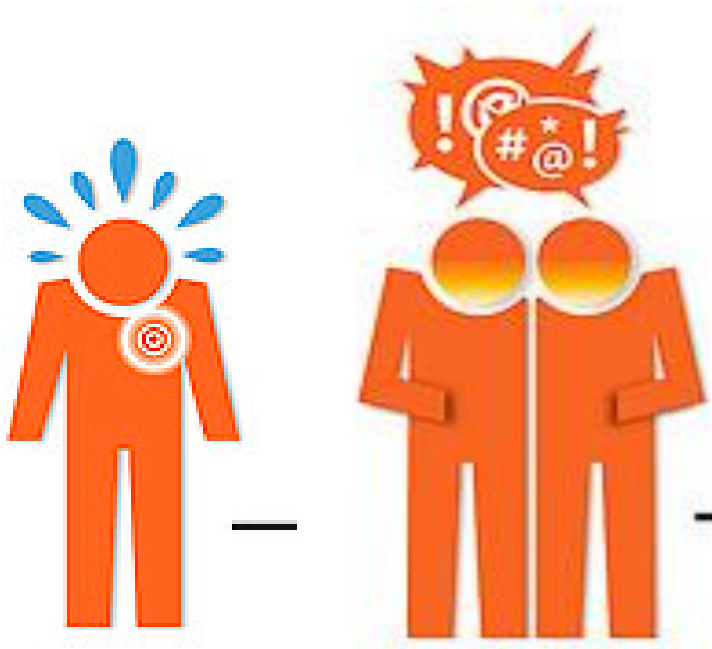


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- Chronic, prolonged, experiences of stress can impede executive functioning and memory
- If stress is not managed well, it can undermine our ability to be effective and can result in burnout.
- *Self-Awareness*, which includes the ability to recognize and label our emotions is the first step to understanding how emotions influence our thinking, decisions, and behavior.
- This is key to *Self-Management*, the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively across situations.
- Thriving through a pandemic requires a healthy mental flexibility.

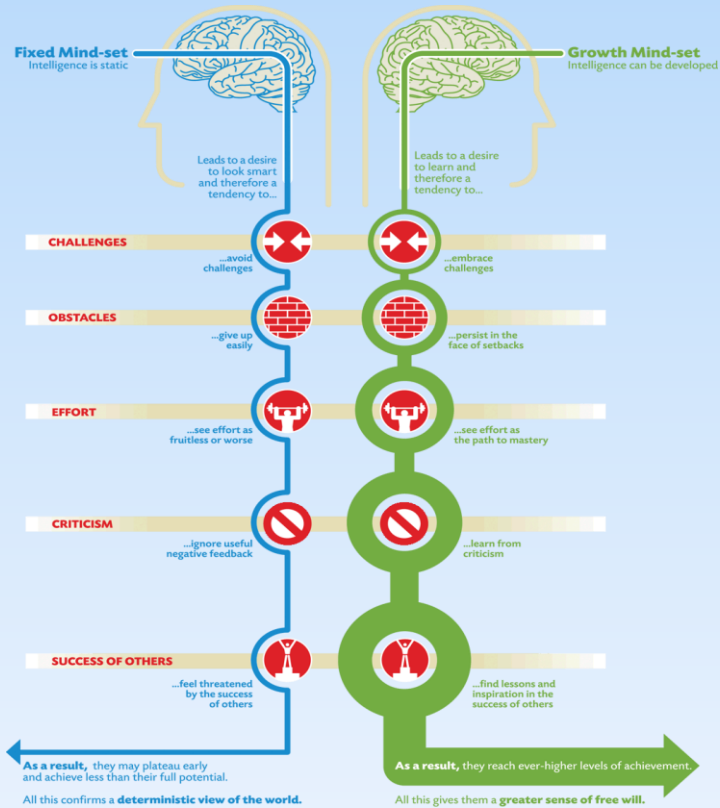
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# What can you control?



With a growth mindset, you can

- see opportunities to control your experience and outcomes
- a desire to learn
- embrace challenges
- persist in the face of setbacks

Learn more @ [mindsetworks.com/science/Impact](http://mindsetworks.com/science/Impact)

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# You Can Be In Control

- Managing the ambiguous and evolving demands requires healthy emotion management.
- Emotion regulation strategies can help create the conditions for effective teaching and learning.
- Self-care is important for everyone.

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# Take Control

Trails to Wellness has published a resource on self-care strategies that are widely-applicable for general use during COVID-19. Read their tips [here](#).

The Support for Teachers Affected by Trauma (STAT) [online curriculum](#) comprises five modules which explore the concepts of secondary trauma, risk factors associated with susceptibility to STS, the impact of STS across multiple life domains, and tangible self-care skills.

WestEd published [a brief](#) offering practical guidance for educators facing the challenges and stresses of the crisis. This resource is aimed at helping educators attend to their own self-care in order to effectively continue to educate and support students.

Pure Edge offers brain breaks which are 1-3 minute strategies that help learners reset and recharge to support self-regulation. The teaching guides and videos are available for free in both English and Spanish. Explore them [here](#).

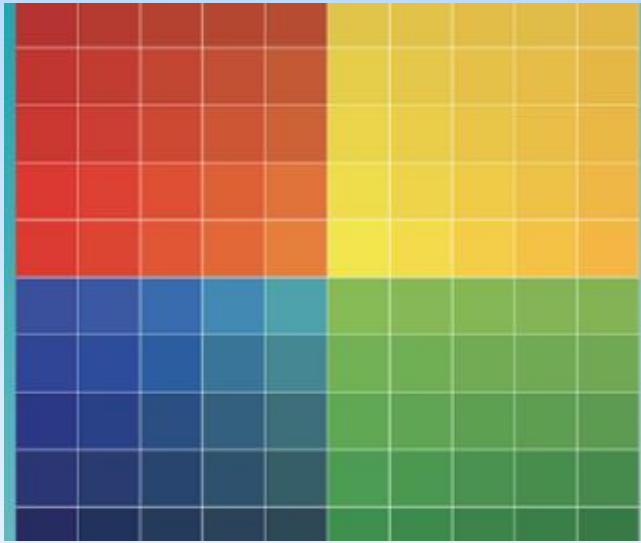
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# How are YOU feeling?



Reflecting on emotions supports the development of a range of SEL skills, helps to build deep interpersonal connections, and can provide relief from stress making space for improved wellness and engagement in learning.

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# Check-In

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence have developed a Mood Meter App to help people enhance self and social awareness around how emotions change throughout the day. The Mood Meter is one of the core tools in the RULER Approach to SEL. Download the app [here](#).

CASEL has developed SEL Reflection Prompts which offer various opportunities for teachers to encourage and support students in reflecting on their own social and emotional development. Find the resource [here](#).

Harvard University's EASEL Lab has developed SEL Kernels—specific activities that support SEL competencies in grades K–6 and encourage the growth and development of social and emotional skills through a variety of instructional methods Discover more [here](#).

HowWeFeel.org lets individuals self-report their key demographics and any health symptoms they experience through a 30-second digital survey. Learn more at [How We Feel: Home](#).

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# Self and Social Awareness

These experiences require *Social Awareness*, which includes empathy, a deep understanding of how others are feeling and what is contributing to their feelings.

We may unconsciously adopt bias and deficit-based thinking embedded in our systems. We must begin by interrogating our position and building self and social awareness. We must reflect on how our identities shape our teaching and relationships.

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# Self and Social Awareness

San Francisco Unified School District has developed a step-by-step implementation guide to enhance whole-school climate with methods for sustainable change through evidence-based restorative practices. Read the guide [here](#).

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments has developed an [action planning guide](#) to support stakeholders in systematically examining current practices and developing new data-informed policies to eliminate disparities in discipline.

Greater Good in Education (GGIE) provides an overview of the mindful reflection process designed by Dray and Wisneski (2011) to support teachers in examining their own biases and assumptions. Explore the protocol [here](#).

A new CASEL CARES [webinar](#) features a conversation with John King and Karen Pittman on educational inequity and how the ongoing pandemic and tragic events happening across the nation have highlighted and exacerbated existing inequities.

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# Navigating Loss

Differential experiences of loss must be attended to in promoting community healing, renewal, and thriving.

Leaders have engaged educators to collaboratively create a supportive strategy for the entire school community and implemented virtually.



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# Navigating Loss

The Brooklyn Lab Charter School has put together a grief and loss [tool kit](#) for school leaders and educators. The toolkit focuses on how to support students and families made most vulnerable by systemic inequities within our education and health systems.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has created a [fact sheet](#) on trauma-informed school strategies during COVID-19. This resource provides information on staff well-being and ways to create a trauma-informed learning environment.

Watch this [video](#) from Trauma Sensitive Schools that features the process of crafting a trauma-sensitive learning environment in a Brockton, MA school as part of a district wide effort to facilitate success for all children.

CASEL provides a process for gaining feedback from the school community, with sample letters and survey templates that can be used to assess current successes and identify areas for growth and additional support needed to move forward. Discover more [here](#).

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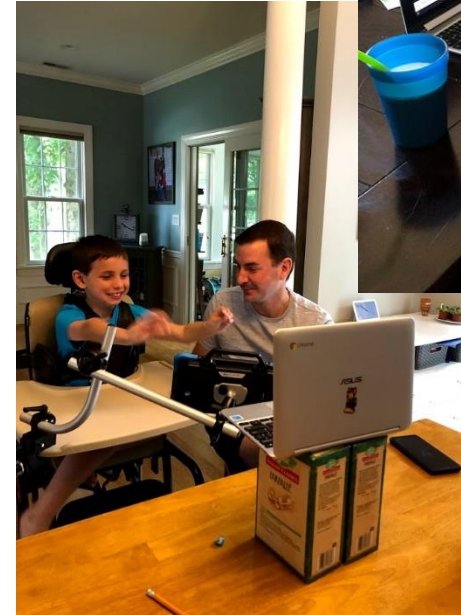
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# Transformed Relationships

All relationships “look and feel” differently. Educators are more reliant on families as partners in instruction, especially for younger learners and those with learning differences. Coordination must leverage technology and resources to maximize opportunities for connection, shared learning experiences, and growth.



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# Transformed Relationships



[Jun 4, 2020](#)  
[Special Ed Students Have Lost Many Services. Here's How SEL Strategies Can Help.](#)

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The Search Institute has developed a [checklist](#) which outlines strategies for educators and school staff to build on their relationships with students during the COVID-19 crisis.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices has published an article on the use of [responsive circles](#) related to COVID-19, allowing students and staff to reflect on how they are feeling and process their experiences throughout the pandemic.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education COVID-19 [check-in survey](#) gathers information about the experiences that students are currently facing, and addresses what can be done to better support them during this time.

NYU has developed a [useful suite of tools](#) for how educators can listen to and learn from families during this pandemic to best support children's academic, social and emotional needs during this time.

# Decision Making Involving all Stakeholders

Making decisions during this time feels overwhelming when the pace and gravity of each decision is amplified.

Leverage a challenge-centered approach to decision making- identify a goal with stakeholders, empathize to better define the barriers to the goal, develop solutions, implement solutions, and revisit and refine.

“Administrators not valuing us as professionals and including us in planning and as an important part of the education team”

“We need to be included in discussions, planning and trainings. They need to create a culture that values support staff and encourage staff to take care of themselves.”

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# Decision Making Involving all Stakeholders

“I think ESP’s would be served well by Administration not viewing them as pawns to be used as fillers to stop every hole they have in a schedule. Especially with the current COVID-19 crisis. The idea of ESPs being passed around and being made the most exposed people in the building while remaining the lowest paid is an abomination.”

“Think of us as a valuable part of the team. Not just a dispensable employee. Not rushing to judgement about who we are and how we will react. Believe in us. Communicate with us. Show some appreciation by addressing us individually in a positive way once in a while.”

“I think better communication is needed at my school. There is a lack of guidance from the superintendent on down. I think if the staff felt valued enough to be included and informed then there would be less stress. If the schools could show us that we are valued and appreciated it would ease some of the stress.”

“Administration needs to realize how essential the paraprofessional staff is to the smooth running of the school. I believe many students see the paraprofessionals as a "safe" person to express their feelings and frustrations to.”

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# Decision Making Involving all Stakeholders

South Bronx Community Charter High School represents an exemplar of success in carrying out a smooth transition to distance learning. Read about the structures and strategies that were implemented to support sustainable competency-based remote education [here](#).

Panorama Education has developed downloadable distance learning [surveys](#) for students, families, and staff which are designed to elevate each stakeholder's voice in this new learning climate surrounding COVID-19.

CASEL has created a [worksheet](#) which can help school leaders prepare to recruit members of their school community—including students, families, staff, and community partners—to contribute to a schoolwide vision for SEL that meets the needs of all learners.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education encourages the use of resource mapping to identify and analyze the programs, people, services, and other school resources to aid leaders in better assessing needs and making informed decisions about where to focus change efforts. Read more [here](#).

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# Emotional Climate

Educators want to feel excited, safe, supported, and calm. When school community members are sensitive to each other's emotional needs and perspectives, it creates a more positive the emotional climate for learning and thriving.



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# Emotional Climate



1. In our class/home/school we want to feel...
2. To feel this way, we will....

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# Emotional Climate

New Schools Venture Fund's [Insight Brief](#) discusses how educators can meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs when schools reopen, whether this will be in-person or virtually. In their brief, the authors describe several cultural and social-emotional indicators that create supportive environments for students.

The Education Policy Center at AIR has provided 10 key ideas for how schools and communities can best support the social and emotional development of children and youth and create healthy school climates. Explore these ideas by accessing the full brief [here](#).

Learning Policy Institute has published a brief focusing on the importance of affirming relationships in a positive school climate for student learning and development, as well as providing students with a sense of safety and belonging. Read the full brief [here](#).

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence hosted a webinar providing guidance in adapting the Charter, a RULER tool used to promote a positive emotional climate, for engaging with family members in the home. Watch the webinar [here](#).

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# SEL and Equity

To move forward, we must be willing to reflect and take a strengths-based approach to change.

**How we can actively work to create systems and schools that reflect everyone?**

SEL training and skills are critical for holding space for safe, difficult, constructive conversations to promote real action.

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# SEL and Equity

The National Equity Project has developed a [downloadable toolkit](#) which offers an introduction to the process, mindsets and activities which build on and adapt the design thinking process to allow for deep innovation and agency amidst institutionalized norms, structures and oppression.

The Aspen Institute published a brief on identifying ways that equity and social, emotional and academic development can be mutually reinforcing. The brief addresses several considerations for implementing social, emotional and academic development through a racial equity lens. Read the brief [here](#).

Facing History and Ourselves have issued a helpful [teaching guide](#) designed to guide educators in beginning conversations with their students around the death of George Floyd and police violence towards black Americans, promoting self-reflection of teachers and students.

Greater Good in Education have provided strategies that cultivate student SEL skills and develop their sense of agency for social change. Addressing each of CASEL's five core SEL competencies, this practice encourages reflection and practices which weave together SEL and social change. Read more [here](#).

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The ambiguity of the pandemic's trajectory and the structural inequities it continues to emphasize, alongside the mounting socio-political unrest and deepening divisiveness across our nation requires immediate, intentional, and preventive action.

**Our school communities' ability to thrive depends on it.**

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## **Additional Resources Available in the *Forthcoming*:**

Cipriano, C., Rappolt-Schlichtmann, G., & Brackett, M.A. (2020). *Supporting School Community Wellness with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) During and After a Pandemic*, Edna Bennet Pierce Prevention Research Center, Pennsylvania State University.

## **Free School Resources for Navigating Emotional Times**

<https://www.rulerapproach.org/navigating-emotional-times/>

## **Free SEL Course for School Personnel from the YCEI**

[www.ycei.org/selcourse](http://www.ycei.org/selcourse)

 **Questions? [Christina.Cipriano@yale.edu](mailto:Christina.Cipriano@yale.edu)**

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