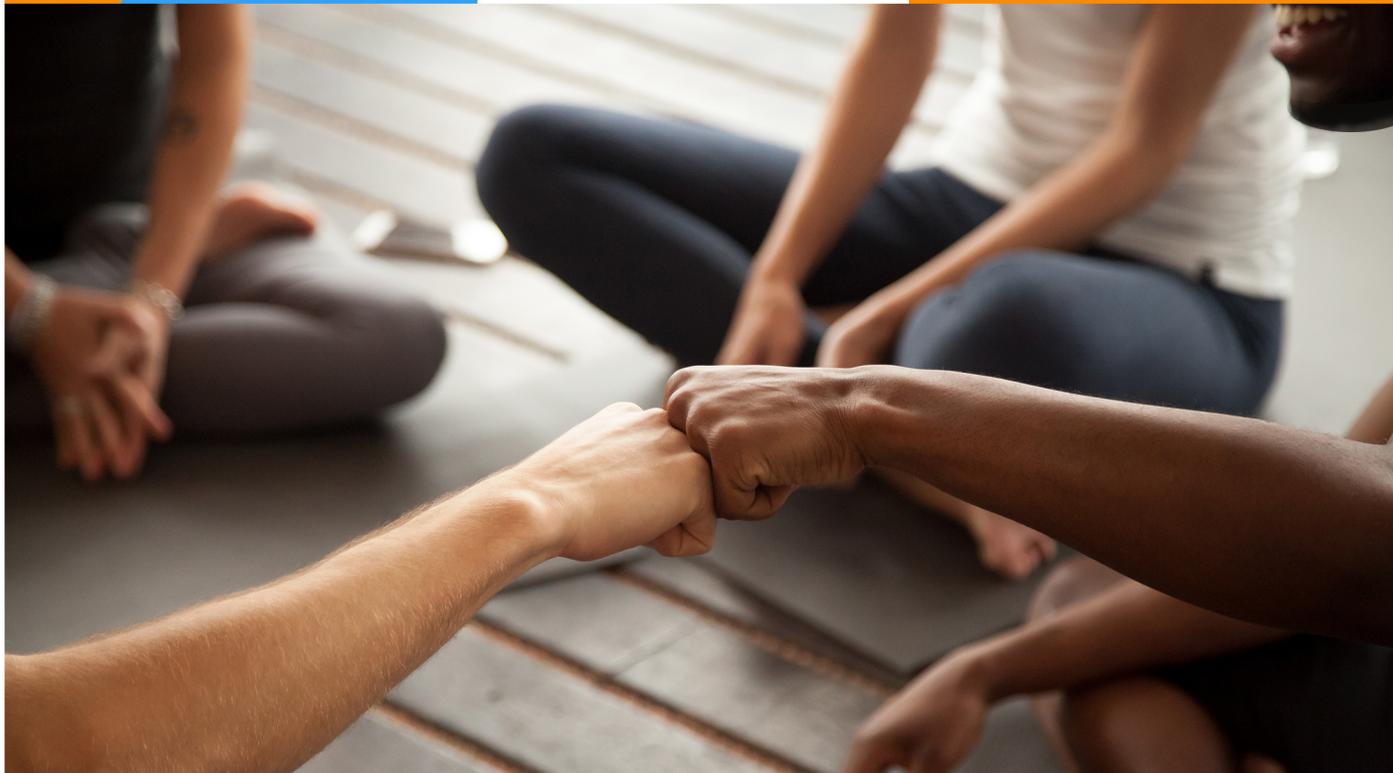


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SHAPE America members*



Et Cetera

Plus



Social and Emotional Learning

What Health and Physical Educators Should Know

Social and Emotional Learning

What Health and Physical Educators Should Know

Social and emotional learning (SEL) has become a critical component of educating today's youth. In school districts across the country, SEL is no longer just a classroom lesson but a system-wide framework involving a coordinated approach in classrooms, schools, communities, and family units.

Research has shown that these efforts can lead to behavioral and academic outcomes including:

- Positive social behavior
- Fewer conduct referrals
- Less emotional distress
- Improved academic performance

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. ([CASEL](#))

SEL in Health and Physical Education

Health and physical educators are on the front lines of the SEL movement — and can maximize their role by creating an optimal classroom environment and teaching students the social and emotional skills and behaviors that will help them succeed in all areas of their lives.

[CASEL's integrated SEL framework](#) identifies five core competencies:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

Because there is congruency between SEL competencies and the National Standards for [K-12 Physical Education](#) and [Health Education](#), SEL should be integrated into the health and physical education classroom starting at the elementary grade levels.

CASEL provides sample activities and examples of general teaching practices to develop these core competencies in [“Sample Teaching Activities to Support Core Competencies of Social and Emotional Learning.”](#) The table below displays an excerpt:

CORE COMPETENCY	SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	TEACHING PRACTICES
Self-awareness	<p>Provide age-appropriate vocabulary words for various emotions and ask students to identify feelings they might have in different situations.</p> <p>Ask students to brainstorm things they can do to improve the way they feel.</p>	<p>Set up a “peace corner” where students can go to reflect on their feelings.</p> <p>Listen deeply to what students say and reflect what you heard about their feelings.</p>
Self-management	<p>Have students brainstorm age-appropriate ways to motivate themselves.</p> <p>Have students identify a goal and document their progress for several weeks as they work toward achieving that goal.</p>	<p>Practice age-appropriate self-management techniques during the school day (e.g., start class with a deep-breathing exercise).</p> <p>Ask students to identify people and resources that can help them in various situations.</p>
Social awareness	<p>Teach an age-appropriate lesson on why it is important to identify how others feel and how to read facial cues and body language.</p> <p>Work with students to organize a community service project.</p>	<p>Build on the diversity in the classroom by having students share their different cultural perspectives on situations.</p> <p>Model and promote a school norm of treating others the way you would want to be treated.</p>
Relationship skills	<p>Teach students how to use “I messages” to share feelings.</p> <p>Conduct role plays to practice resolving conflicts or resisting peer pressure.</p>	<p>Establish class meetings to give students the chance to practice speaking and listening skills.</p> <p>Give students authentic feedback for resolving conflicts peacefully.</p>
Responsible decision-making	<p>Give students age-appropriate problem scenarios and have them work in groups to decide what they would do.</p>	<p>Create, agree to, and help students understand logical consequences, discussing them frequently as appropriate.</p>

Activity Ideas for Health and Physical Educators

In her 2018 blog post, [Taking a Skills-Based Approach to Social and Emotional Learning](#), SHAPE America member Erin Lumpkins shares several skills-based activity ideas that help improve SEL competencies:

- Teach students about **self-awareness** strategies for maintaining positive mental health, such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga and journaling, then have them develop a plan for using one or more of these strategies when they are faced with negative emotions.
- To learn **self-management**, students create vision boards that display their detailed goals, then think about what people or resources can help them achieve those goals, as well as how they will overcome possible barriers to success.
- As students learn **social awareness**, they are more able to empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Through a project called Place Matters, students explore health disparities caused by environment, such as the presence (or lack of) grocery stores, pharmacies, fitness facilities, etc.
- Older students can develop **relationship skills** by practicing interpersonal communication and analyzing influences. One activity idea involves students creating a guide for parents on how to talk to teens about sexuality, with tips on how to communicate clearly and listen actively.
- Students learn **responsible decision-making** by developing a “choose your own adventure” story in which the main character is faced with making several decisions that include realistic consequences.

As Lumpkins mentions in her article, health and physical educators must lead the charge on SEL. **Make plans now to attend SHAPE America’s upcoming Professional Learning Institute on SEL, to be held July 31-August 1, 2019, in Sioux Falls, SD.** Details to come at shapeamerica.org.

Additional Resources

- [CASEL Online Library](#)
- [Taking a Skills-Based Approach to Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning: Why It Matters and How to Foster It](#)
- [Appropriate Practices in School-Based Health Education](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning Policies in Physical Education](#)

If you have any tips or resources about social and emotional learning, please follow up in our [mySHAPE America](#) forum to share your ideas with the larger SHAPE America community.