

Are You Ready?

SEL Program Readiness Inventory *Increasing SEL intentionality in programs through practitioners*

Identify your program’s existing strengths and areas for growth in an effort to increase impact on SEL outcomes via three areas:

- The **ATTENTION** practitioners pay to SEL
- The **ACTION** practitioners undertake to improve SEL outcomes
- The **ASSESSMENTS** practitioners use to help improve and describe a program’s impact on youth

ATTENTION	Cite Observable Evidence	Yes	No	Maybe
Does our organization have explicit program goals connected to social and emotional learning skills?				
Does our staff comfortably talk about the components of social emotional learning and why it matters?				
Do we focus on specific SEL skills (like self-control, teamwork, conflict resolution, grit/initiative, time management)?				
ACTION	Cite Observable Evidence	Yes	No	Maybe
Do we regularly engage with and provide feedback to youth and parents about SEL skills and attitudes?				
Do we integrate social and emotional learning opportunities into regular program activities?				
Does our staff have opportunities for professional development to intentionally improve SEL practices?				
ASSESSMENT	Cite Observable Evidence	Yes	No	Maybe
Do we have tools and strategies in place to measure progress in social and emotional skills?				
Do we use data to make changes to our practices to improve social and emotional learning and skills?				
Do we have tools to measure changes in social emotional learning outcomes?				

Strategies for Improving SEL Practices and Assessing the Road Ahead

Add Reflective Planning Time

Be Explicit – Use SMART Goals

Utilize a Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle

Where do we want to be?

Where are we now?

How do we get from where we are to where we want to be?

Equip Staff: Expertise in SEL begins with a foundation in good youth development practices and grows with deeper understanding of the SEL domain and learning process. Effective staff need to be fluent in the concepts and language of social emotional learning.

- Build understanding and fluency
- Support social and emotional learning in practitioners
- Develop a culture of coaching
- Practice giving effective feedback
- **Guiding Question:** What key experiences and staff practices are implemented in your program?

Create the Everyday Learning Environment: SEL skills are best developed within a culture that values ways of feeling, relating, and of doing. Staff are responsible for cultivating a learning environment in which youth voices are expected and respected (Rusk et al., 2013). Staff can influence the culture of the program by paying attention to the ways that routines, behavior expectations, and conflict resolution processes support SEL.

- Spend time developing and using consistent routines
- Develop positive behavior expectations
- **Guiding Questions:** What is the project sequence of your offering? What is the main goal or “work” of the offering? What is the SEL content sequence for the offering? Where and when do the SEL practices surface? How do the project sequence and the SEL content sequence interact over the course of the offering?

Developing Impactful Learning Experiences: Programs that focus on specific skill development using sequenced and active learning strategies and focused and explicit skill content are consistently successful in promoting SEL with youth (Durlak et al., 2011) and adults (Humphrey, 2013). Reflection is also an important characteristic of SEL cycles (Blyth, Olson and Walker, 2015).

- Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit
- Reflection
- **Guiding Questions:** Who are our youth and which SEL skills could help them achieve greater agency? What does it look like when these youth are demonstrating their skills in our program? Are there opportunities for these youth to practice these skills in our program? What changes in staff development and/or curriculum would increase opportunities to practice these SEL skills?

Using Data For Improvement: In order to be intentional about SEL (so that young people experience growth and positive change) using data for improvement is a critical tool. Meaningful measurement is not only about proving that your program works, but also about improving the work that you do.

- **Guiding Question:** What are high priorities for you based on the youth you serve and the goals of your program? Are the youth in my program growing on their capacity to use SEL skills in our program and in their lives?