



ENABLE PROJECT

# "BUILDING TRAUMA- SENSITIVE SCHOOLS POLICY TOOLKIT"

edited by pistes solidaires



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# ENABLE



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# IMPRESSUM

This Policy Paper is published as part of the 'ENABLING School Integration of migrant and refugee children through social and Emotional learning interventions to address psychosocial trauma – ENABLE' project funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme (2022-1-FR01-KA220-SCH-000087053).

## Title

ENABLE Project : Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools Toolkit

## Year

2024

## Publisher

Soha Lemaître-El Jammal, Pistes Solidaires, France

## Reviewers

Angeliki Karageorgopoulou, Directorate of Central Greece, Greece  
Bilal Kılınc, Mamak İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü, Türkiye  
Dimitrios Moschos, ReadLabs Brussel, Belgium  
Maria Menegaki, Symplexis, Greece  
Mohamed Bashir Omar, CESIE, Italy  
Sara Sow Linares, Sirius Network, Belgium

## Design and layout

Pistes Solidaires, France

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# INTRODUCTION

In recent years, educators and school leaders have increasingly recognized the profound impact that trauma has on student development, behavior, and learning. Trauma can stem from a variety of experiences, including abuse, neglect, poverty, family instability, and community violence, as well as more situational forms such as migration and exile. When students face adversity, the resulting stress can have lasting effects on brain development, emotional regulation, and behavior, often disrupting their ability to engage fully in learning and establishing healthy relationships with their peers, teachers, and the rest of the educational community. Recognizing this, schools have begun to prioritize trauma-informed practices, which focus on understanding and addressing the needs of students who may be carrying the invisible burden of traumatic experiences.

Trauma-informed practices aim to create safe, supportive school environments where students feel respected, understood, and valued. These practices involve school-wide strategies that address the social-emotional needs of all students while providing targeted support to those who have experienced adversity. Such strategies can include fostering positive relationships with adults and peers, integrating social-emotional learning into the curriculum, and employing mindful discipline techniques that prioritize empathy and understanding over punitive responses. Trauma-informed practices not only help students feel safe and supported but also actively promote healing and resilience. By creating a school culture that is both nurturing and consistent, educators can empower students to build coping skills, improve self-regulation, and strengthen their sense of self-worth.



The importance of trauma-informed practices in schools goes beyond individual well-being; these practices are critical for fostering an inclusive, equitable educational environment. Research has shown that trauma-sensitive approaches contribute to improved academic outcomes, better attendance, and reduced behavioral incidents, as students who feel safe and supported are more likely to stay engaged and motivated in their learning. Moreover, trauma-informed practices help schools move away from punitive disciplinary measures, which can re-traumatize students and perpetuate negative cycles of behavior. Instead, trauma-sensitive approaches encourage understanding and trust, helping to de-escalate conflicts and cultivate a more positive school climate. This approach not only benefits students who have experienced trauma but also enriches the educational experience of all students, as it promotes empathy, respect, and resilience across the school community.

In an increasingly complex world, these practices are essential for preparing students to face challenges with resilience and optimism, equipping them not only to succeed in school but also to lead fulfilling lives beyond the classroom.





## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOLKIT

The Policy toolkit aims to introduce a holistic trauma-informed approach within primary and secondary schools through an integrated School Policy Framework. This framework aims to establish a safe, stable, and supportive environment for traumatized migrant, refugee and displaced (MRD) children. The adoption of this approach necessitates a paradigm shift at both the staff and organizational levels, which the Policy will achieve by implementing concrete measures that reshape the school's culture, practices, and strategies for addressing trauma among vulnerable children, including migrants, refugees, and the displaced.

The **specific objectives** of this Policy toolkit are:

- To improve teachers' professional development in dealing with MRD children's diversity in the classroom,
- To help schools facilitate the integration and success of newly arrived migrant and refugee pupils by focusing on their social and emotional learning,
- To strengthen collaboration between all members of the school community (headmasters, teachers and non-teaching staff, learners and families).
- To raise the awareness of educational institutions, decision makers and school heads about the importance of strengthening their policy framework on psychosocial trauma treatment for MRDC
- Through these objectives, the toolkit provides comprehensive guidance on transforming school practices to support all students in a trauma-informed way.







## TARGET GROUPS OF THIS POLICY TOOLKIT

- Teachers, school heads and non-teaching staff for primary and secondary education levels,
- Newly arrived migrant and refugee students,
- Parents/families, especially of migrant and refugee students
- Local, national & European political stakeholders



## POLICY OF DIVERSITY WITHIN TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOLS

The *Policy of Diversity* within a trauma-informed school framework is an essential commitment to recognizing and valuing the unique identities, backgrounds, and experiences each student and staff member brings to the educational environment. In a trauma-informed context, diversity is not only about celebrating different cultures, races, ethnicities, languages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds but also about understanding and addressing the varied ways trauma and adversity impact individuals from these diverse backgrounds. Trauma-informed diversity policies aim to create a safe, inclusive environment where all students feel seen, respected, and supported, especially those who may have encountered different forms of trauma.





# WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT POLICY OF DIVERSITY WITHIN TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOLS?

## 1. Recognizing Diverse Experiences with Trauma

A trauma-informed approach to diversity acknowledges that experiences with trauma differ widely based on cultural, socioeconomic, and personal factors. For instance, students from marginalized communities may be disproportionately affected by phenomena like poverty, violence, or discrimination, while others might experience trauma related to family instability, health challenges, or displacement. By understanding that trauma manifests uniquely across different backgrounds, educators and administrators can respond more empathetically and effectively, tailoring support to meet individual needs. A diversity-informed trauma policy recognizes these differences and seeks to provide a comprehensive response that avoids “one-size-fits-all” solutions, promoting personalized care for every student.

## 2. Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Sensitive Practices

Trauma-informed schools with a strong diversity policy employ culturally responsive practices to better serve students from all backgrounds. This involves understanding and respecting cultural values, family dynamics, language preferences, and other personal or community-specific factors that influence students' experiences and behaviors. Culturally responsive practices in a trauma-sensitive setting might include multilingual support services, family engagement opportunities that reflect cultural preferences, and restorative practices that respect cultural values around healing and community involvement. Additionally, staff training in cultural competence and trauma awareness is critical, as it empowers educators to avoid biases and misunderstandings that could otherwise hinder students' ability to feel safe and supported.



### **3. Inclusive Representation in Policies and Practices**

A Policy of Diversity within trauma-informed schools is committed to inclusive representation in all aspects of school policy, ensuring that diverse voices are included in decision-making and that all students feel represented in the curriculum and school culture. This might include ensuring that reading materials, visual displays, and school activities reflect a wide range of cultures, histories, and perspectives. When students see themselves reflected in the school environment, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and trust, which is crucial in trauma-sensitive settings. Policies that actively promote inclusion also reduce feelings of isolation and increase resilience, helping students who may feel marginalized to engage fully in their learning and social environment.

### **4. Equity in Access to Resources and Support**

Equity is at the heart of a diversity policy within trauma-informed schools, which means providing all students with access to necessary resources, regardless of their background or experiences. Trauma-informed diversity policies emphasize equitable access to mental health resources, counseling, mentoring programs, academic support, and extracurricular opportunities. This equitable approach recognizes that some students may require additional support to overcome barriers associated with trauma or systemic inequality. Ensuring that these resources are accessible and tailored to meet the unique needs of diverse students helps mitigate the long-term effects of trauma and fosters a fairer educational landscape where all students have the opportunity to succeed.

### **5. Continuous Reflection and Community Engagement**

The *Policy of Diversity* within trauma-informed schools is a dynamic, evolving commitment. Schools must regularly assess their practices to ensure they are meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body, adapting policies as new challenges or insights arise. This commitment includes ongoing dialogue with students, families, and community members from varied backgrounds to ensure their voices are heard and respected. Feedback loops,

diversity committees, and partnerships with local cultural organizations can all help schools remain responsive to the community's needs and committed to inclusive, trauma-informed practices

In essence, a *Policy of Diversity* within trauma-informed schools is about creating an educational environment where all students, regardless of their background or experiences, feel safe, valued, understood, and supported. By integrating culturally responsive, equitable, and inclusive practices into the trauma-informed framework, schools can build a strong foundation for academic and personal success, fostering resilience and a true sense of belonging for every student.

Building a trauma-sensitive school environment requires a holistic approach that integrates reflection, collaboration, and proactive strategies. While continuous reflection and community engagement lay the foundation for responsive practices, the effectiveness of a trauma-informed approach depends significantly on the knowledge and preparedness of the school staff. Educators, administrators, and support personnel must be equipped with the necessary skills, resources, and understanding to address the complex needs of students, particularly those affected by trauma.

In the following sections of this policy toolkit we are going to explore 6 different domains bringing together theoretical and practical parts to provide concrete approaches to support the different target groups involved in creating trauma-sensitive school environment.

At the end of this Policy Toolkit, a set of recommendations will be proposed on different levels to ensure the holistic approach that we are aiming for.





# DOMAIN

## 1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

---

**Training modules and activities** on trauma awareness and response.  
**Professional development** plans and resources.  
**Strategies** for ongoing support and supervision.



**THEORETICAL**

**PART.**



## DEFINING TRAUMA AND TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

To develop a Trauma-Informed School Environment, we begin by defining trauma, identifying its key components, and understanding trauma-informed practices. With these foundations in place, we will then outline common trauma symptoms that migrant, refugee and displaced (MRD) children may experience and examine how these symptoms can impact their learning.

### WHAT IS TRAUMA AND TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES?

Trauma is defined as events in human life that the individual either experiences or witnesses when death, the threat of death, severe injury or a threat to the integrity of the body occurs (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013, pp. 265, 266). The individual is physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially affected by these events. Trauma is diagnosed according to whether the individual can overcome these events or not. The starting point of traumas is an intense stress environment. The fact that traumas are especially seen in young individuals is due to their vulnerability in coping with this intense stress.

Trauma causes the person to be deeply affected both physically and psychologically. The most common psychological type is high stress. Stress arouses feelings of extreme insecurity, fear and helplessness in the individual. This intense stress can cause adverse reactions in all areas of life, especially in children. In this respect, coping with trauma is very important in children's developmental stages. Children and adults encounter trauma for many reasons.

These can be causes such as war, death, accident, natural disaster, or illness. There are three different types of trauma: acute, chronic and complex (Allen, 2016). Acute trauma is defined as a single event such as a natural disaster or parental suicide. Chronic trauma refers to repeated exposure to attacks on the mind or body. Repeated sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, domestic violence, and parental substance abuse are examples of chronic trauma.



Complex trauma refers to simultaneous or sequential exposure to multiple traumatic events or persistent chronic conditions (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2003).

Trauma-sensitive practices help to recover from trauma healthily. The stronger the protective factors of the individual such as resilience, positive self-esteem, self-regulation skills or healthy coping mechanisms, the easier it is to overcome the trauma. In addition, external factors such as secure attachment, social support, spirituality, positive peer relationships, school engagement, and life skills such as self-regulation, trustworthiness, and expressing emotions also reduce these effects (Buse & Burker, 2013).

Just as children with strong immune systems have fewer diseases, it is not possible to see the effects of trauma in individuals with strong protective factors. In this respect, trauma-sensitive training should be provided both in the family and school environment during the upbringing of the individual. Trauma-sensitive activities that the individual has gained strength in will make it easier to overcome difficult stress situations in later life.

## **RECOGNIZING TRAUMA SYMPTOMS AMONG MRD STUDENTS**



Although the signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder commonly begin within a month of a traumatic event, in some cases symptoms may not appear until years after the event, in this case, the migration experience. These symptoms can cause significant problems in the individual's social or work life and personal relationships. They can also interfere with an individual's ability to lead a normal daily life.

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are usually categorized into several different types: Re-experiencing, i.e. remembering, avoidance, hyperarousal, i.e. negative changes in thinking and mood, and changes in physical and emotional reactions. Signs and symptoms may differ over time or vary from person to person.

Symptoms of reexperiencing, i.e. remembering, include distressing dreams or nightmares about the traumatic event or the journey of migration, severe emotional distress or physical reactions to anything that reminds the



individual of the traumatic event, reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again, or recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event.

Avoidance symptoms and signs include avoiding activities, people or places that remind the individual of the traumatic event, or trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event.

Symptoms of negative changes in thinking and mood due to overstimulation include negative thoughts about oneself, other people, the future of the world, memory problems including not remembering important elements of the traumatic event, difficulty maintaining close relationships with others, hopelessness, feeling disconnected from family and friends, loss of interest in activities once enjoyed, difficulty experiencing positive emotions, emotional numbing.

Symptoms of changes in physical and emotional reactions due to overstimulation include being easily startled or frightened, self-destructive behaviours such as always being alert to danger, sleep difficulties, concentration difficulties, irritability, outbursts of anger, aggressive behaviours, excessive feelings of guilt or shame (ACIBADEM, 2023).

## **THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON MRD STUDENTS**



Traumatized children and adolescents are confronted with memories of bad events and losses and the pain they cause. Although the psychological effects and symptoms of trauma may not be apparent at the time of the trauma, they can manifest themselves in a very typical way either immediately or after a long period. These include psychological reactions such as intense fear, anxiety, feelings of helplessness and guilt, and physical symptoms (such as increased heart rate, and chest and stomach pains).

Post-traumatic stress reactions are generally categorized into three groups:

1. Scenes related to the trauma are experienced over and over again. As a result of the emotional and physical reactions caused by every sound, smell, image and similar sensation that causes the event to replay in the mind, the child behaves as if he/she is reliving that moment.

2. There is an effort to avoid places, people and other clues that remind the traumatic event. This can lead to a loss of interest in many things in life. In some cases, these reactions can even lead young people to isolate themselves from other people and become withdrawn.

3. The body reacts physically as if the danger is still present. Some of these reactions that can be seen in children and young people include arousal as if the trauma will be repeated at any moment, being easily startled and on edge, nervousness, outbursts of anger, falling asleep, difficulty sleeping and inability to concentrate.



In a natural disaster such as an earthquake, flood, fire or accident, children and their families experience different kinds of losses in addition to the intense fear caused by the natural disaster. They may lose their homes, possessions, loved ones and the regular way of life to which they are accustomed. Every significant loss is a trauma for a human being and leads to a range of emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt and regret. These are normal and, although initially painful, are healthy. The more important the person lost was in the life of the child or young person, the more intense the reactions may be.

Young people may either try to solve the problems caused by traumatic loss by completely detaching from their parents and other adults and showing overconfidence in themselves, or on the contrary, they may become completely dependent on the adults around them. In disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires and accidents, many children and adolescents experience both disaster and loss. It is more difficult for young people who experience such a sudden and traumatic loss to cope with their grief reactions.

This is because, in such a situation, the grief reaction cannot follow a normal course because of the trauma. The child and adolescent's mind is preoccupied for a very long time with tragic memories of the event and circumstances that led to the loss. This leads to a more challenging emotional intensification called "complex grief".

During this process, positive memories associated with the deceased person are sometimes not recalled due to recurrent images or memories of the traumatic event that led to the death, making it difficult to accept and adjust to the death of the loved one. The adolescent also avoids relationships and positive activities that remind him/her of this traumatic loss, thus narrowing the space for talking, thinking, feeling and dealing with it.

In addition to stress reactions, another condition that jeopardizes the mental health of children and adolescents is the risk of depression. Depression is different from stress reactions and has different symptoms. These include intense sensitivity, loss of appetite, difficulty in concentrating attention, a significant decrease in pleasure and interest in life, fatigue, loss of energy, feelings of self-worthlessness, guilt, hopelessness and suicidal thoughts (Kaya, 2023).

Depressive reactions can sometimes be very serious and can lead to some of the following consequences:

- A serious decline in school success and learning difficulties,
- Distance yourself from social relationships,
- Lack of interest in normal life activities,
- Alcohol or drugs consumption,
- Lead to other psychological and mental health issues
- Suicide attempts.

Human beings face all kinds of events in life. These events sometimes have negative effects and sometimes have positive effects. Emotions that arouse negative effects can be briefly called trauma. The person can overcome the trauma in the normal natural process. But when they cannot, they become a psychological case. Strong family structure and school education play a key role in overcoming trauma.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES**

Professional development in trauma-informed practices is essential to equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to support all students,

especially those affected by trauma. Training educators to recognize trauma responses, employ trauma-sensitive classroom management techniques, and build emotional safety can profoundly affect student engagement and learning outcomes. Effective trauma-informed professional development is ongoing, practical, and collaborative, moving beyond one-time training to embed principles of empathy, resilience-building, and student-centered support within daily practices.



Within this Policy Toolkit, we are going to explore the key elements of Effective Trauma-Informed Professional Development and how they can support educators and teachers to develop secure learning environment:

- **Trauma Awareness and Impact on Learning**

Training should cover the effects of trauma on brain development, behavior, and academic performance, helping educators and teachers understand how trauma can manifest in students' attitudes, focus, and social interactions. When educators in general are aware of these signs, they can respond compassionately, with interventions aimed at support rather than punishment.

- **Practical Skills for Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms**

Trauma-sensitive training provides specific strategies for classroom management, such as de-escalation techniques, communication skills, and methods for establishing predictable routines. Practical activities like role-playing and scenario analysis enable teachers to practice responses in simulated situations, building confidence and skill.

- **Cultural Sensitivity and Equity Training**

Trauma-informed professional development must also address the intersection of trauma with race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other factors that can influence students' experiences. By incorporating equity-focused training, educators learn to respect and validate diverse backgrounds, building trust and connection with all students.

- **Self-Care and Compassion Fatigue**

Recognizing the emotional role of supporting students with trauma histories, professional development should include self-care strategies and methods to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout. This helps sustain educators' well-being and commitment to a trauma-sensitive approach.

To maintain a trauma-sensitive environment in schools, educators and administrators need consistent support and guidance. Ongoing support and supervision in trauma-informed practices reinforce professional development by creating a culture of continuous learning, reflection, and adaptation. Structured support systems help prevent staff burnout, enable continuous improvement of trauma-informed practices, and strengthen a collaborative, resilient school culture.

Here are some **ongoing support and supervision strategies** that can be used to foster the professional development in Trauma-Informed Schools environments:

- **Peer Support Networks and Learning Communities**

Peer support networks, such as professional learning communities or trauma-informed practice groups, allow educators to share experiences, strategies, and challenges with one another. These communities provide a safe space for discussing sensitive topics, gaining insights, and developing solutions collaboratively. When supported by school leaders, professional learning communities foster a culture of empathy and collective responsibility.

- **Regular Reflective Supervision**

Reflective supervision provides educators with a structured time to process their experiences with a trained supervisor or counselor, focusing on the emotional and psychological aspects of their work. This practice helps staff address challenging situations, manage emotions, and refine their trauma-sensitive approaches. Regular check-ins with supervisors also allow school leaders to monitor the effectiveness of trauma-informed practices and make adjustments as needed.

- **Mentorship Programs**

Pairing new staff with experienced trauma-sensitive educators provides practical guidance, emotional support, and modeling of effective techniques. Mentorship builds confidence in new teachers, fosters a shared understanding of trauma-informed practices, and strengthens bonds within the school community.

- **Ongoing Access to Mental Health Resources and Crisis Support**

Schools committed to trauma-sensitive practices can benefit from offering immediate access to mental health professionals, either on-site or through partnerships with local organizations. Having crisis support available to both staff and students ensures timely interventions, reduces the risk of secondary trauma for educators, and maintains a safe and supportive environment for all.

- **Feedback Loops and Continuous Improvement**

Establishing regular feedback loops with educators, parents, and students can reveal areas where trauma-informed practices are working well and areas that need refinement. This data-driven approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement, making trauma-sensitive practices adaptable to the changing needs of students and staff.





**PRACTICAL**

**PART.**



# ACTIVITY 1.

## UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA AND ITS IMPACT ON LEARNING (WORKSHOP + CASE STUDY)

### OBJECTIVE

This activity helps educators and schoolteachers understand trauma's impact on students' social-emotional and academic development and provides practical skills for identifying and supporting trauma-affected students in a school environment.

**Duration:** 1.5 to 2 hours

**Target Group:** Educators & School Teachers

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- PowerPoint presentation or handouts on trauma basics (to be prepared by the teacher or educational staff, in collaboration with a mental-health professional)
- Case study packets with fictional student profiles
- Whiteboard or flipchart for group discussion

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### 1. Introduction to Trauma (30 minutes):

Begin with a presentation on the types and sources of trauma, focusing on how different forms of trauma (e.g., acute, chronic, complex) affect students' behavior, emotional regulation, and learning. Include data on the prevalence of trauma among students and common signs teachers may observe, such as withdrawal, aggression, or inconsistent academic performance.

#### 2. Group Discussion on the Trauma Brain (15 minutes):

Facilitate a discussion on the "trauma brain" and the physiological impact of trauma on the brain's development. Use visuals to explain how stress response affects attention, memory, and problem-solving, making learning challenging for students who have experienced trauma.



### 3. Case Study Activity (45 minutes):

Divide participants into small groups and distribute case study packets with fictional student profiles, each depicting a student with a different trauma experience. Profiles might include scenarios such as a student experiencing family instability, community violence, or social discrimination.

Each group will discuss the following questions:

- What signs of trauma does the student in your case study exhibit?
- How might these signs affect the student's learning and behavior?
- What specific strategies could you use to support this student within a trauma-sensitive framework?

Ask groups to share their reflections and proposed strategies with the larger group.

### 4. Reflection and Takeaways (15-30 minutes):

Conclude the session with a reflection on how this knowledge can impact participants' approach to their own classrooms. Encourage them to think of practical ways to adapt their classroom environment, language, and discipline practices to better support trauma-affected students.

#### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

Participants will gain foundational knowledge about trauma's impact on learning, improve their ability to identify signs of trauma in students, and become familiar with practical support strategies.



**Annexes: Case study packets**



## CASE STUDY 1: MAYA - THE WITHDRAWN STUDENT

### BACKGROUND:

Maya is a 9-year-old student in the 4th grade. She recently moved to a new city with her mother after her parents separated. Maya's father was emotionally abusive, and her mother decided to leave the relationship for their safety. Since the move, Maya's mother has been working long hours to support them, leaving Maya home alone after school.



### OBSERVED BEHAVIORS:

- Maya has become increasingly quiet and withdrawn in class, often avoiding group activities and preferring to work alone.
- She rarely raises her hand or participates in discussions.
- During recess, Maya often sits by herself rather than playing with classmates.
- Maya struggles to focus during lessons and often appears distracted, looking out the window or doodling.



## CASE STUDY 2: JORDAN - THE AGGRESSIVE AND REACTIVE STUDENT

### BACKGROUND:

Jordan is a 12-year-old student in the 6th grade who has recently been placed in foster care. He was removed from his home due to neglect and exposure to domestic violence. Jordan has been in multiple foster homes over the past two years and struggles with feeling abandoned. His current foster family is supportive, but Jordan has difficulty trusting adults.



### OBSERVED BEHAVIORS:

- Jordan often becomes defensive and reactive when he perceives criticism, even for small corrections from teachers.
- He tends to respond with aggressive language toward both teachers and classmates, frequently raising his voice.
- Jordan occasionally skips class and sometimes refuses to do assignments, often saying, “It doesn’t matter” or “I don’t care.”
- When working in groups, he frequently argues with peers and may physically push if he feels provoked.



## CASE STUDY 3: SOFIA - THE ANXIOUS AND PERFECTIONISTIC STUDENT

### BACKGROUND:

Sofia is a 15-year-old student in the 10th grade. She and her family recently immigrated to the France due to unrest in their home country. The family faced numerous hardships during their journey, including temporary displacement and financial struggles. Sofia's parents expect her to succeed academically, hoping it will lead to a better future, which adds pressure for her to excel in school.



### OBSERVED BEHAVIORS:

- Sofia becomes visibly anxious before tests and assignments,
- often saying things like, "I can't fail," or "I'm going to mess up."
- She avoids asking questions in class because she fears looking "dumb."
- Sofia spends excessive time on homework, sometimes staying up late to perfect her work.
- When she receives anything less than an "A," Sofia withdraws and is highly self-critical, often experiencing tearfulness and frustration.



## CASE STUDY 4: AMIR - THE RECENTLY MIGRATED AND ISOLATED STUDENT

### BACKGROUND:

Amir is a 13-year-old student in the 7th grade who recently arrived in Türkiye with his family. Originally from Syria, Amir and his family fled their home country due to ongoing conflict, spending several years in a refugee camp before being granted asylum. The journey to Türkiye was difficult and involved several relocations, and Amir has witnessed traumatic events that have affected his sense of safety. His family now lives in a small apartment in an unfamiliar neighborhood, and his parents struggle with language barriers and limited work opportunities, which adds financial and emotional stress to their daily lives.



### OBSERVED BEHAVIORS:

- Amir has limited Turkish skills and often struggles to understand lessons, which causes frustration and sometimes leads him to disengage or put his head down in class.
- He appears anxious and overwhelmed by loud noises and sudden movements, especially during crowded school transitions like recess and lunch.
- Amir avoids eye contact with adults and rarely speaks in class, making him seem withdrawn to his teachers and peers.
- He has difficulty making friends and often spends breaks alone, sometimes sitting in secluded areas or doodling by himself.



## ACTIVITY 2.

### PRACTICING TRAUMA-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION (ROLE-PLAY AND FEEDBACK)

#### OBJECTIVE

This activity allows educators to practice trauma-sensitive communication techniques, equipping them with skills to respond empathetically and effectively to students displaying signs of trauma-related distress.

**Duration:** 1 to 1.5 hours

**Target Group:** Educators & School Teachers

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Scenario cards with student-teacher interaction situations
- Guidelines for trauma-sensitive language and communication techniques (handout)
- Notepads for participant reflections



#### INSTRUCTIONS:

##### 1. Introduction to Trauma-Sensitive Communication (15 minutes):

Begin with a brief overview of trauma-sensitive communication. Explain core principles such as using calm and non-threatening language, validating student experiences, and providing choices to empower students and avoid triggering a stress response. Distribute handouts with specific phrases and techniques to use during challenging interactions.

##### 2. Role-Play Scenarios (45 minutes):

Divide participants into pairs and distribute scenario cards with different student behaviors linked to trauma responses. You will find 4 scenario cards in the annexes of this exercise or you can create your scenarios based on real cases that you encountered. Scenarios might include:

- A student who shuts down and refuses to participate in an activity.
- A student who becomes aggressive when they feel criticized.
- A student who is withdrawn and unresponsive during a one-on-one conversation.

Each participant will take turns playing both the educator and the student in each scenario. After each role-play, participants reflect on the following:

- What trauma-sensitive language or techniques did they use?
- How did it feel to use these techniques in real-time?
- How did they think their responses would impact the student?

### **3. Group Debrief and Feedback (30 minutes):**

Reconvene as a group for a facilitated debrief. Ask participants to share insights from their role-play experiences and discuss challenges or successes in using trauma-sensitive techniques. Highlight common themes, such as the importance of patience, tone, and non-judgmental responses.

### **4. Reflection and Wrap-Up (10-15 minutes):**

Encourage participants to reflect on their own communication habits and set a personal goal for integrating trauma-sensitive language into their interactions. Have them write down one or two specific strategies they plan to implement in their classrooms or schools.

### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

Participants will gain practical skills in using trauma-sensitive language and techniques, building confidence in their ability to respond calmly, empathetically, and effectively to students showing signs of trauma.



**Annexes: Scenario Cards**



## SCENARIO CARD 1: DISTRACTED AND DISENGAGED BEHAVIOR

### SCENARIO:

Sarah, a 10-year-old student, is often distracted in class, staring out the window or doodling on her notebook instead of paying attention to the lesson. Today, after you ask her a question and she doesn't respond, you approach her desk to encourage her to join the discussion. Sarah looks up briefly but avoids eye contact and says softly, "I'm just tired."



### BACKGROUND CONTEXT:

Sarah recently experienced a significant family upheaval, with her parents going through a divorce. She has been sleeping poorly and feels anxious about the changes at home.

### GOAL:

Use trauma-sensitive communication to support Sarah, showing empathy and understanding while encouraging her to participate as she is able.





## SCENARIO CARD 2: AGGRESSIVE AND DEFIANT RESPONSE

### SCENARIO:

Carlos, a 12-year-old student, has a history of reacting defensively to correction. During a group activity, he gets frustrated and shoves another student. When you approach him to talk, he immediately crosses his arms, glares, and says, "Leave me alone. I didn't do anything wrong!"



### BACKGROUND CONTEXT:

Carlos has recently been placed in foster care after a turbulent home life, which has made him sensitive to criticism and quick to assume he's being unfairly targeted.

### GOAL:

Practice using trauma-sensitive language to de-escalate Carlos's defensiveness and build trust, showing that you understand his perspective and are there to help rather than to blame.



## SCENARIO CARD 3: PERFECTIONISM AND ANXIETY

### SCENARIO:

Lily, a 15-year-old student, becomes visibly anxious and perfectionistic when it comes to school assignments. Today, she bursts into tears when she gets a B on a math test, saying, "I can't believe I messed up. I'm so stupid." She refuses to continue with the rest of the lesson, feeling defeated.



### BACKGROUND CONTEXT:

Lily comes from a high-achieving family with strict expectations. She has a fear of disappointing her parents, and this stress has led her to develop perfectionistic tendencies.

### GOAL:

Use trauma-sensitive communication to help Lily calm down and gain perspective, validating her feelings while encouraging a healthier outlook on mistakes and learning.



## SCENARIO CARD 4: SHUT DOWN AND WITHDRAWN

### SCENARIO:

Amir, a recently immigrated student from Syria, is asked to participate in a group discussion in English. He appears overwhelmed and puts his head down, refusing to respond. When you ask if he's okay, he mutters, "I don't know English. Just leave me."



### BACKGROUND CONTEXT:

Amir is adjusting to life in a new country, which includes learning a new language and facing cultural differences. His experiences with displacement and war have left him anxious in unfamiliar social settings.

### GOAL:

Use trauma-sensitive communication to make Amir feel safe and supported, offering patience and understanding while encouraging him to participate at his comfort level.



## ACTIVITY 3.

### "TRAUMA-INFORMED CLASSROOM DESIGN" BRAINSTORMING SESSION

#### OBJECTIVE

To help teachers create trauma-sensitive classroom environments that foster emotional safety, structure, and inclusivity.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Target Group:** Educators & School Teachers

#### MATERIALS NEEDED:



- Chart paper or whiteboards
- Markers and sticky notes
- Classroom design handouts with examples of trauma-informed classroom setups (e.g., calming corners, sensory supports)
- Reflection handouts to help teachers connect classroom design to trauma-sensitive goals

#### STEPS:

##### 1. Introduction to Trauma-Sensitive Environments (10 minutes):

Start by reviewing the importance of physical and emotional safety in trauma-informed classrooms. Discuss specific elements that support trauma-sensitive spaces, like flexible seating, calming areas, or sensory tools.

##### 2. Brainstorming in Small Groups (15 minutes):

Divide teachers into groups and give each group a classroom design handout. Ask them to brainstorm how they might adjust their own classrooms to promote trauma-sensitive practices. Possible focus areas include:

- Creating "calm corners" with comfortable seating and soothing visuals
- Incorporating sensory tools like stress balls or fidget tools

- Redesigning the classroom layout to encourage open space and reduce visual clutter

### **3. Create Action Plans (10 minutes):**

Each group should outline a simple action plan for making trauma-sensitive modifications to their classroom. Teachers can use the reflection handouts to document these ideas and identify how the changes can help students feel safer and more supported.

### **4. Group Sharing and Feedback (10 minutes):**

Each group presents their action plan to the larger group. Encourage other teachers to ask questions, offer feedback, and share any insights or experiences they have with similar setups. Highlight actionable, budget-friendly ideas that everyone could try in their own classrooms.

### **EXPECTED OUTCOME:**

Teachers will gain practical ideas for adapting their classrooms in trauma-sensitive ways. This activity encourages educators to be mindful of the physical classroom environment, integrating elements that can ease student anxiety, support self-regulation, and foster a sense of belonging.





# DOMAIN

## 2. ■ CREATING A SAFE & SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

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**Guidelines** for fostering a safe physical and emotional school environment.

**Best practices** for classroom management.

**Strategies** for promoting inclusivity, diversity and cultural sensitivity.



**THEORETICAL**

**PART.**



# GUIDELINES FOR FOSTERING A SAFE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Creating a trauma-sensitive school environment requires intentional actions to foster a sense of safety, trust, and belonging for every student. Schools play a vital role in supporting students' mental, emotional, and social well-being, particularly for those who have faced challenging or traumatic experiences. These guidelines outline strategies to build a secure and nurturing atmosphere that empowers students to thrive both academically and emotionally. By emphasizing empathy, consistency, and inclusive practices, educators, staff, and administrators can work together to cultivate a school culture where all students feel valued, supported, and safe.

## 1. CULTIVATE TRUST AND CONNECTION WITH POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



- **Empathetic Communication:** Train yourself to practice active listening, showing empathy in every interaction with students. Non-judgmental responses and validation of feelings can help students feel seen and understood.
- **Fostering Belonging:** Encourage students to form connections with peers and staff. Implement activities that promote teamwork, inclusivity, and collaboration to make every student feel they belong.
- **Regular Check-Ins:** Incorporate structured moments throughout the week (e.g., morning meetings or check-in circles) where students can share their feelings in a safe space, knowing they won't be judged.

## 2. PRIORITIZE EMOTIONAL SAFETY AND TRAUMA-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE



- **Use Supportive Language:** Encourage the use of language that is inclusive, kind, and focused on growth. For example, instead of reprimanding behavior, try asking what the student might need to feel better or more focused.



- **Model Positive Behavior:** Teachers and staff should model the behavior they wish to see, demonstrating calmness, respect, and self-regulation, which helps create a sense of safety for students.
- **Establish Predictability:** Create a clear, predictable daily routine and communicate any changes in advance. For students affected by trauma, predictability can alleviate anxiety and promote a sense of control and security.

### 3. DESIGN A PHYSICALLY SAFE AND CALMING ENVIRONMENT

- **Safe Spaces for Self-Regulation:** Designate calming areas in classrooms and common spaces where students can go if they feel overwhelmed. These areas can have soft seating, sensory tools (e.g., fidget tools, calming visuals), and relaxation materials (e.g., coloring pages).
- **Welcoming Visuals:** Display posters, artwork, and messages that promote inclusivity, diversity, and kindness, reinforcing the school's commitment to safety and respect.
- **Comfortable Classroom Setup:** Arrange furniture to allow easy movement and avoid overcrowding. A flexible seating plan can create more welcoming, inclusive spaces and reduce stress related to confined spaces.

### 4. IMPLEMENT AND COMMUNICATE CLEAR BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- **Clear, Consistent Expectations:** Set up clear, age-appropriate rules for behavior that emphasize respect, kindness, and cooperation. Communicate these expectations regularly to reinforce their importance.
- **Collaborative Rule-Setting:** Involve students in the process of creating classroom rules to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. When students help establish guidelines, they are more likely to respect and uphold them.
- **Non-Punitive Responses to Behavior:** Address misbehavior by exploring underlying needs and encouraging reflection rather than punitive measures. Use restorative practices to help students learn from their actions and make positive changes.

## 5. INTEGRATE TRAUMA AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL LITERACY INTO THE CURRICULUM

- **Teach Emotional Awareness:** Incorporate lessons on identifying and expressing emotions, conflict resolution, and empathy. Teaching students to understand their own and others' feelings can improve relationships and reduce misunderstandings.
- **Promote Self-Regulation Skills:** Include mindfulness, deep-breathing exercises, or guided meditation as part of the daily or weekly schedule to help students develop self-regulation techniques.
- **Normalize Help-Seeking Behavior:** Regularly communicate that it's okay to ask for help, whether from a teacher, counselor, or peer. Normalize the process of reaching out for support, so students see it as a strength, not a weakness.





**PRACTICAL**

**PART.**



# ACTIVITY 1.

## "CREATING OUR SAFE SPACE TOGETHER"

### OBJECTIVE

To involve students in designing a safe and calming classroom environment, promoting a sense of ownership, belonging, and respect for classroom guidelines.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Target Group:** Students

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Large poster board or blank paper for each student
- Markers, colored pencils, and other art supplies
- Sticky notes for adding ideas to a “classroom agreement” board

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### 1. Introduction to Safe Spaces (5 minutes):

Start with a discussion about what it means to feel safe in the classroom. Prompt students to think about things that help them feel calm and comfortable and explain how everyone’s input is valuable in creating a safe and inclusive space.

#### 2. Designing a “Calm Corner” and Classroom Agreement (20 minutes):

Engage students in designing a “calm corner” or designated space where they can go if they need a break. Ask students to draw or write down their ideas on how they would like this space to look and what items might be comforting to include, such as soft seating, books, or sensory items. Encourage them to include messages or visuals that they find encouraging or calming.

*Classroom Agreement:* On a separate board, have students write or draw ideas for behaviors and attitudes that will help everyone feel safe and respected.

This can include suggestions like “listening to each other” or “using kind words.” Each student adds their sticky note to the agreement board.

### **3. Classroom Walkthrough and Display (10 minutes):**

Have students present their ideas for the “calm corner” and discuss their contributions to the classroom agreement board. Select a few key elements from the students’ input to add to the classroom environment, involving them in any setup if possible.

### **4. Reflection Circle (10 minutes):**

End the activity with a brief circle discussion. Invite students to share what they enjoyed about creating the calm corner and classroom agreement, and ask if they feel it will help make the classroom feel more supportive and welcoming.



### **EXPECTED OUTCOME:**

This activity allows students to play an active role in creating their learning environment, which can increase their sense of belonging and emotional safety. By contributing to both the calming space and classroom expectations, students feel more invested in maintaining a respectful, trauma-sensitive environment that supports everyone.



## ACTIVITY 2.

### "EMPATHY MAPPING FOR TRAUMA-SENSITIVE TEACHING"

#### OBJECTIVE

To help teachers gain a deeper understanding of their students' perspectives, enabling them to respond empathetically and create a more supportive classroom environment.

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Target Group:** Teachers & Educators

#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Empathy Mapping templates or large sheets of paper divided into quadrants
- Markers or pens
- Sticky notes or index cards



#### STEPS:

##### 1. Introduction to Empathy Mapping (10 minutes):

Begin by explaining the concept of empathy mapping and its value in trauma-sensitive teaching. Empathy mapping involves exploring different perspectives and imagining students' emotional, social, and academic needs, particularly for those who might have experienced trauma.

Explain the four empathy map quadrants:

- **What the student says:** How might the student express their feelings or needs?
- **What the student thinks:** What concerns, worries, or thoughts might the student have?
- **What the student feels:** What emotions might the student experience in certain situations?
- **What the student does:** How might the student behave in response to their emotions or experiences?

## 2. Select and Explore Student Profiles (15 minutes):

Divide teachers into small groups and assign each group a different student profile to focus on. These profiles could represent various backgrounds, such as a student who is new to the school, a student who struggles with focus, or a student with a history of conflict at home. Alternatively, teachers could choose to focus on actual students they work with (while respecting confidentiality). Each group should fill out their empathy map for their assigned profile, adding details that consider the student's perspective in each quadrant. For example:

- **What they might say:** "I can't concentrate"; "School feels overwhelming."
- **What they might think:** "No one understands what I'm going through."
- **What they might feel:** Anxious, isolated, frustrated.
- **What they might do:** Withdraw from activities, act out, avoid assignments.

## 3. Discussion and Reflection (20 minutes):

Once groups have completed their empathy maps, bring everyone together for a group discussion. Have each group share insights from their empathy map, discussing questions such as:

- "What did you find most surprising about stepping into this student's perspective?"
- "How might understanding these feelings and thoughts impact your approach to supporting this student?"
- "What small actions could help validate this student's feelings and needs?"



## 4. Creating Action Steps (15 minutes):

Based on the empathy maps, ask each group to create two or three trauma-sensitive action steps they could apply to support students.

Examples might include:

- Checking in with the student periodically to offer support.
- Using calming language and validating the student's emotions.
- Providing small breaks or a quiet space for students who may feel overwhelmed.

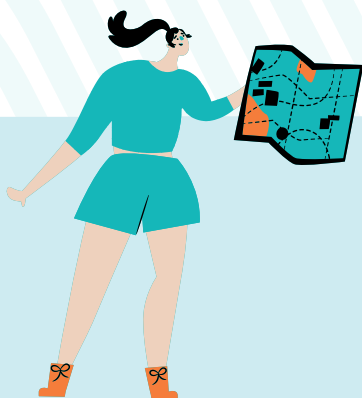


## 5. Wrap-Up and Reflection (5 minutes):

Conclude with a brief reflection. Ask teachers how they can integrate empathy mapping into their teaching and if they'd like to incorporate this perspective-taking approach as a regular practice.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME:

Through empathy mapping, teachers gain insights into their students' inner worlds and needs, strengthening their trauma-sensitive responses. This activity helps teachers practice compassionate awareness, leading to more thoughtful interactions and classroom strategies that promote emotional safety and belonging.







# DOMAIN

## 3 ■ BUILDING SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILLS

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**Curriculum resources** for social-emotional learning (SEL).  
Activities and exercises for **building resilience and coping skills**.  
**Methods for integrating SEL** into daily classroom activities.



**THEORETICAL**

**PART.**



# THE ORIGINS AND PURPOSE OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process, through which individuals, particularly students, acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

The origins of SEL stretch back to Ancient Greece, when the famous Greek Philosopher Plato, in his work “The Republic”, proposed a holistic curriculum. He thought that education should cover not just regular subjects such as Maths and Philosophy but also sports, art, becoming a good person and knowing what is right and wrong. He believed that if education was solid and caring, it would make people grow up to be good citizens with strong values.

SEL emerged from the recognition that positive social and emotional development sets the foundation for academic success (David Osher, 2021). Social and emotional learning (SEL) has its roots in psychology, education, and child development.

Here are some key historical and theoretical origins of SEL:



**1. Emotional Intelligence (EI):** SEL draws heavily from the concept of emotional intelligence, which was issued by psychologist Daniel Goleman in the mid-1990s. Goleman's work highlighted the importance of recognizing, understanding, and managing one's own emotions and the emotions of others. This laid the foundation for emphasizing emotional skills in education.

**2. Child Development Theories:** The theories of prominent psychologists like Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lev Vygotsky have influenced the development of SEL programs. These theories emphasize the importance of social and emotional development in children and adolescents and provide insights into how they grow and learn in these areas.

**3. Positive Psychology:** Positive psychology, developed by Martin Seligman and others, has contributed to the emphasis on well-being and character strengths in SEL. It focuses on fostering positive emotions, resilience, and personal growth.

**4. Educational Philosophy:** The philosophy of progressive education, championed by educators like John Dewey and Maria Montessori, stressed the importance of experiential and holistic learning. SEL aligns with these principles by recognizing that emotional and social skills are essential for both academic success and life in general.

**5. Social Learning Theory:** Albert Bandura's social learning theory suggests that people learn by observing and imitating others. This theory is relevant to SEL as it underscores the importance of modelling positive social and emotional behaviors for children.

**6. Behavioral Psychology:** The principles of behaviorism, as established by B.F. Skinner, have also contributed to SEL. Behaviorism focuses on how behaviors can be shaped through reinforcement and conditioning, and these principles are often applied in SEL interventions to encourage prosocial behavior.

**7. Research in Education:** Research in the field of education, including studies on classroom management, bullying prevention, and school climate, has informed the development of SEL programs. This research has highlighted the importance of creating safe and supportive learning environments.



Over time, these various influences have converged to shape the field of social and emotional learning. SEL programs are now implemented in schools across the world, with a growing body of research demonstrating their positive impact on academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being.

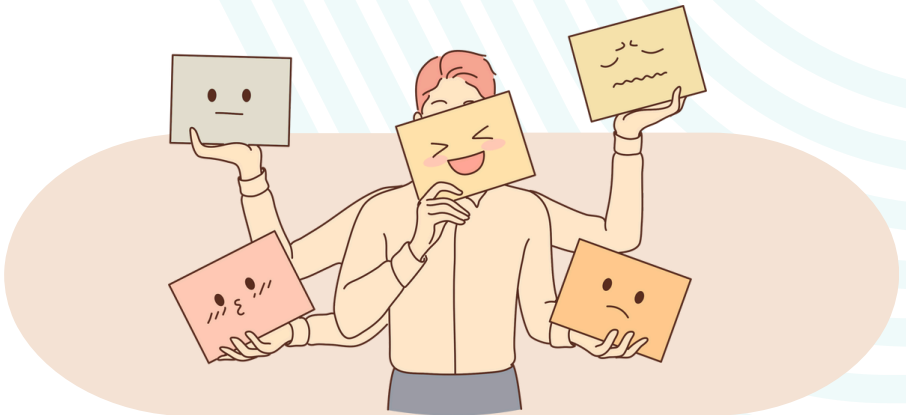
The purpose of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is to foster the development of essential social and emotional skills in individuals, particularly children and adolescents, to help them lead healthy, fulfilling lives and succeed

academically, personally, and professionally. SEL programs and initiatives aim to achieve several key objectives:

- **Emotional Awareness:** SEL helps individuals recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions effectively. This includes identifying and labeling feelings, understanding the causes of emotions, and learning healthy ways to cope with them.
- **Empathy:** SEL encourages individuals to develop empathy, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Empathy promotes positive relationships, cooperation, and conflict resolution.
- **Relationship Skills:** SEL teaches individuals how to build and maintain healthy relationships, including effective communication, active listening, and conflict resolution skills. These skills are essential for building positive connections with others.
- **Responsible Decision-Making:** SEL promotes responsible decision-making by helping individuals develop the ability to make thoughtful and ethical choices. It encourages considering the consequences of actions and making decisions that are in line with one's values and the well-being of others.
- **Self-Awareness:** SEL supports self-awareness, helping individuals recognize their strengths, weaknesses, and values. This self-knowledge is essential for setting and achieving goals and making informed life choices.
- **Self-Management:** SEL equips individuals with strategies to manage stress, control impulses, and set and work toward personal and academic goals. It teaches self-regulation and self-discipline.
- **Academic Achievement:** SEL is shown to have a positive impact on academic performance. When students are emotionally and socially competent, they can focus on learning, collaborate effectively with peers, and handle challenges and setbacks more resiliently.

- **Positive School Climate:** SEL contributes to creating a positive school environment where students feel safe, supported, and included. A nurturing school climate can lead to reduced bullying, improved behavior, and increased student engagement.
- **Life Success:** SEL skills are not limited to the classroom; they are essential for success in various life domains. Individuals who possess strong social and emotional skills are better equipped to handle the challenges of adulthood, including in their careers and personal relationships.
- **Mental Health and Well-Being:** SEL plays a critical role in promoting mental health and well-being. It can help prevent and manage emotional and behavioral issues such as anxiety, depression, and aggression.

Overall, the purpose of Social Emotional Learning is to empower individuals with the skills and attitudes necessary to lead emotionally healthy, socially responsible, and successful lives. It is a holistic approach to education that recognizes the importance of emotional and social development alongside academic learning.





# SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) encompasses a set of competencies or skills that individuals can develop to better understand and manage their emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and effectively navigate various social situations. These competencies are often organized into core domains or areas of focus. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a leading organization in the field of SEL, has identified five core competencies:

**1. Self-Awareness:** This competency involves recognizing and understanding one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and personal goals. Key skills within self-awareness include:

- Identifying and labelling emotions.
- Recognizing how emotions can influence thoughts and behaviors.
- Identifying personal strengths and areas for growth.
- Understanding one's values and beliefs.

**2. Self-Management:** Self-management skills help individuals regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in constructive ways. Key skills within self-management include:

- Managing stress and anxiety.
- Setting and working toward goals.
- Exhibiting self-discipline and self-control.
- Demonstrating adaptability and resilience in the face of challenges.

**3. Social Awareness:** Social awareness involves recognizing and understanding the emotions, perspectives, and needs of others. Key skills within social awareness include:

- Empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
- Recognizing and respecting diversity and cultural differences.
- Demonstrating compassion and concern for others.
- Developing a sense of social responsibility.



**4. Relationship Skills:** Relationship skills are essential for building and maintaining healthy relationships with others. Key skills within relationship skills include:

- Effective communication: Listening actively and expressing oneself clearly.
- Cooperation and teamwork.
- Conflict resolution and problem-solving.
- Building and maintaining positive relationships.

**5. Responsible Decision-Making:** Responsible decision-making involves making ethical and thoughtful choices that consider the well-being of oneself and others. Key skills within responsible decision-making include:

- Identifying problems and analyzing situations.
- Considering consequences and potential risks.
- Making ethical and responsible choices.
- Evaluating the impact of decisions on oneself and others.

These competencies are not only relevant to academic success but also to personal growth, mental health, and overall well-being. SEL programs and initiatives aim to promote the development of these competencies in individuals from a young age through adolescence and into adulthood. When individuals possess strong social and emotional skills, they are better equipped to navigate life's challenges, build positive relationships, and lead fulfilling lives.







# SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING FRAMEWORKS

Several social and emotional learning (SEL) frameworks and models have been developed to guide the implementation of SEL programs and initiatives in educational settings. These frameworks provide a structured approach to incorporating SEL into the curriculum and fostering the development of social and emotional competencies among students. Here are some prominent SEL frameworks:



- **CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) Framework:** CASEL is a leading organization in the field of SEL and has developed a widely recognized framework consisting of five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. CASEL's framework also emphasizes the importance of integrating SEL into the classroom environment, school-wide practices, and family and community partnerships.
- **Castle Framework:** The Castle (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) Framework is an expanded version of CASEL's framework. It incorporates five core SEL competencies but further breaks down these competencies into specific skills and sub-skills.
- **The RULER Approach:** Developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the RULER Approach focuses on Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions. It provides a structured approach for promoting emotional intelligence in schools. The RULER Approach includes strategies for integrating emotional literacy into the curriculum and creating an emotionally intelligent school climate.

- **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports):** PBIS is a framework that emphasizes the importance of teaching and reinforcing positive social and behavioral skills in schools. While not exclusively an SEL framework, it incorporates SEL principles by promoting social competence and emotional regulation. PBIS uses a tiered approach to address behavior and discipline, with the goal of creating a positive school culture.
- **Second Step:** Second Step is an evidence-based SEL program that provides a structured curriculum for teaching social and emotional skills to students. It aligns with the CASEL framework and includes lessons on empathy, emotion management, and problem-solving. Second Step is widely used in elementary and middle schools.
- **Responsive Classroom:** The Responsive Classroom approach focuses on creating a positive and respectful classroom environment that supports the development of social and emotional skills. It emphasizes daily morning meetings, clear expectations, and cooperative learning. Responsive Classroom is often used in elementary schools.
- **MindUP:** The MindUP program, developed by the Hawn Foundation, combines mindfulness practices with SEL. It teaches students about brain science and mindfulness techniques to promote emotional regulation and well-being. MindUP is used in various grade levels.

These frameworks and programs provide educators with guidance and resources to integrate SEL into their teaching practices and school cultures effectively. The choice of framework may depend on the specific needs and goals of a school or district, as well as the age group of the students being served.





**PRACTICAL**

**PART.**



# ACTIVITY 1.

## "THE EMOTION WHEEL"

### OBJECTIVE

To help teachers understand the importance of recognizing and expressing emotions in students, and to provide tools for integrating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into their daily teaching practices.

**Duration:** 20-30 minutes

**Target Group:** Teachers and Educators

### MATERIALS NEEDED



- Large sheet of paper or whiteboard
- Markers in various colors
- A copy of the "Emotion Wheel" for each teacher (resources like Plutchik's Emotion Wheel or simplified versions can be found online, link in annexes)

### STEPS

#### 1. Introduction to SEL (5 minutes):

- Start with a brief overview of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Explain how SEL helps students recognize and manage their emotions, develop empathy, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

#### 2. Presenting the Emotion Wheel (5 minutes):



- Distribute a copy of the Emotion Wheel to each teacher.
- Explain that the Emotion Wheel is a tool that assists students in identifying and expressing their feelings. Highlight how emotions are interconnected and can shift from one state to another.

### 3. Small Group Activity (10 minutes):

- Divide teachers into small groups of 3-4 participants.
- Ask each group to choose a core emotion scenarios (e.g., joy, sadness, fear, anger).
- In their groups, teachers discuss classroom scenarios where students might experience this emotion and identify behavioral signs that could indicate the student is feeling this way.
- Each group then brainstorms SEL strategies to help students manage this emotion (e.g., breathing exercises for anger, sharing circles for sadness).

### 4. Group Sharing and Discussion (10 minutes):

- Each group shares its insights and strategies with the larger group.
- Facilitate a discussion on the different approaches and how these strategies can be incorporated into everyday classroom routines.
- Consider questions like, “How could you adapt these strategies for different ages or unique student needs?”

### 5. Conclusion (5 minutes):

- Recap the importance of SEL and key takeaways from the activity.
- Encourage teachers to use the Emotion Wheel in their classrooms and to continue exploring tools and techniques to support students’ social-emotional development.

### ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Keep the activity interactive and ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate.
- Be ready to provide concrete examples and share personal experiences to illustrate SEL concepts.



## EXPECTED OUTCOME

This activity helps teachers deepen their understanding and integration of SEL into their teaching, with a focus on recognizing and managing emotions.

## SUPPORTING VIDEO

For additional insight, teachers may watch those videos on [SEL](#) and the [Emotion Wheel](#).

**The Wheel of Emotion:** <https://www.6seconds.org/2022/03/13/plutchik-wheel-emotions/>

## Annexes:





## CORE EMOTION: **joy**

### *Scenario 1*

A student named Sam has just finished a challenging project and received positive feedback from the teacher. Sam is visibly happy, smiling, and excited to share their work with classmates.

- Behavioral Signs: Smiling, talking energetically, showing work to peers.
- SEL Strategies: Encourage Sam to reflect on what steps they took to succeed, allowing them to celebrate their effort and resilience.



### *Scenario 2*

During a group activity, a student named Ali feels thrilled to have been chosen as the team leader. Ali is full of ideas and ready to organize the group, although other students are less enthusiastic.

- Behavioral Signs: Taking charge, talking enthusiastically, possibly overwhelming quieter group members.
- SEL Strategies: Guide Ali to recognize the importance of listening to others and help them channel their excitement into teamwork.



## CORE EMOTION: **sadness**

### *Scenario 1*

After losing a game during recess, a student named Mira returns to class looking downcast and withdrawn. She has her head on her desk and isn't engaging with the activity at hand.

- Behavioral Signs: Head down, minimal interaction with others, low energy.
- SEL Strategies: Gently check in with Mira to acknowledge her feelings. Offer her space to talk, or invite her to rejoin the class activity when she feels ready.



### *Scenario 2*

Liam, a student who recently moved schools, is feeling disconnected in class. He often appears sad and doesn't actively engage in group discussions, rarely raising his hand to participate.

- Behavioral Signs: Sitting alone, reluctance to speak up, low engagement.
- SEL Strategies: Create opportunities for Liam to share about himself in low-pressure settings. Pair him with a buddy to encourage connection with peers.





## CORE EMOTION: **fear**

### *Scenario 1*

During a reading activity, a student named Lilia becomes visibly nervous when it's her turn to read aloud. She looks down, fidgets, and hesitates, and her voice is shaky when she starts speaking.

- Behavioral Signs: Fidgeting, avoiding eye contact, speaking in a quiet or shaky voice.
- SEL Strategies: Offer Lilia the option to read with a friend or have her read a shorter section. Gradually build her confidence by providing positive reinforcement when she participates.



### *Scenario 2*

A student named Amadou has a test coming up and is clearly anxious about it. He mentions feeling sick to his stomach, keeps asking questions about the test, and appears distracted during review sessions.

- Behavioral Signs: Repeated questions, signs of nervousness, physical complaints like a stomachache.
- SEL Strategies: Reassure Amadou by going over a study plan with him. Teach him deep-breathing techniques and offer positive affirmations, reinforcing his effort over outcomes.



## CORE EMOTION: **anger**

### *Scenario 1*

During a group project, a student named Rachel becomes frustrated when her teammates don't follow her ideas. She starts raising her voice and speaks in a confrontational tone.

- Behavioral Signs: Raised voice, crossed arms, tense posture, frustration.
- SEL Strategies: Pause the activity and give Rachel a moment to calm down. Encourage her to take a few breaths and express her feelings in a constructive way. Model how to communicate frustrations respectfully.



### *Scenario 2*

Mika, a student who struggles with math, is having difficulty with an assignment and grows visibly upset. He slams his pencil down and mutters, "I hate this. I'm terrible at math."

- Behavioral Signs: Frustration, muttering, negative self-talk, giving up on the task.
- SEL Strategies: Approach Mika calmly, validate his frustration, and offer small, achievable steps to help him re-engage with the assignment. Encourage positive self-talk, reminding him of past successes.



## ACTIVITY 2.

### "RESET AND REFRESH" FOR STUDENTS

#### OBJECTIVE

To help students learn and practice self-regulation techniques for managing their emotions and behaviors in a safe space.

**Duration:** 15-20 minutes (can be done as a regular activity each day or week)

**Target Group:** Students

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- A "Reset Corner" or calming area with soft seating, sensory items (e.g., stress balls, fidget tools), and calming visuals
- "Reset and Refresh" cards with simple exercises (e.g., deep breathing, mindful stretching, drawing) or self-regulation techniques



#### STEPS

##### 1. Introduce the Reset Corner (5 minutes):

Explain that the classroom has a designated area where students can go to take a break, refocus, and "reset" if they feel overwhelmed or frustrated. Let students know that this is a safe place where they can take a moment to calm down. Students going there should be quiet and relaxing. Moreover the reset corner must always be inside the classroom so that the teacher is able to supervise the students using it.

##### 2. Introduce "Reset and Refresh" Techniques (10 minutes):

Show students some of the "Reset and Refresh" cards, demonstrating simple techniques like deep breathing (e.g., "Take a deep breath, hold for a count of three, and slowly release") and mindful stretching. Explain that they can use these cards when they need a moment to calm down or feel more focused.



### 3. Practice Together (5 minutes):

Lead the class through a few of the techniques on the cards, allowing students to try each one so they become comfortable with the options available to them. Encourage them to use these techniques whenever they feel they need a moment to reset.

## EXPECTED OUTCOME

Students will learn self-regulation skills they can use in the classroom to manage emotions and behaviors in a positive way. This activity creates a safe classroom environment by promoting emotional awareness and helping students take responsibility for their well-being.

### Annexes: Reset & Refresh Cards

#### 1. Deep Breathing Card: "Breathe Like a Balloon"

##### Instructions:

- Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
- Imagine there's a balloon in your stomach.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose, filling up your belly like a balloon.
- Hold for a count of 3.
- Slowly let the air out through your mouth, feeling your belly deflate.
- Repeat 5 times, then notice how calm you feel.



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#### 2. Tense & Release Card: "Squeeze and Let Go"

##### Instructions:

- Sit comfortably with your hands on your lap.
- Take a deep breath and tense (squeeze) your hands into tight fists.
- Hold the squeeze for 5 seconds.
- Exhale slowly and release, letting your hands relax.
- Repeat with your shoulders by raising them toward your ears, holding, and then relaxing as you exhale.
- Notice how relaxed your body feels afterward.



### 3. Positive Visualization Card: “Imagine Your Happy Place”

#### Instructions:

- Close your eyes and think of a place that makes you feel safe and happy. It could be the beach, a park, or anywhere you love.
  - Imagine yourself there. What do you see, hear, or smell?
  - Take a few deep breaths while you picture this place in your mind.
  - Stay there for a few moments, then open your eyes and feel ready to take on the rest of your day.
- 

### 4. Mindful Movement Card: “Stretch and Reach”

#### Instructions:



- Stand up and reach your arms up toward the sky, stretching your fingers as high as you can.
  - Take a deep breath in, then exhale and let your arms come down slowly.
  - Roll your shoulders up and back three times.
  - Twist gently from side to side at the waist, then slowly return to standing.
  - Take one more deep breath and enjoy feeling relaxed.
- 

### 5. Grounding Exercise Card: “Activate your 5 senses”

#### Instructions:

- Look around the room and find 5 things you can see. Name each one to yourself.
- Close your eyes and listen. Name 4 sounds you can hear.
- Notice 3 things you can feel, like the floor under your feet or your hands on your lap.
- Take a deep breath and notice 2 things you can smell.
- End by taking one more deep breath, feeling calm and ready.



## 6. Gentle Focus Card: "Draw Your Breath"



### Instructions:

- Take a piece of paper and a marker or pencil.
  - As you breathe in, draw a line across the paper, making it rise like a wave.
  - As you breathe out, let the line gently fall, creating a flowing pattern.
  - Repeat this for 5-10 breaths, watching your lines form waves on the paper.
  - Notice how calm your breathing feels, then set down your pencil.
- 

## 7. "Count Down to Calm" Card

### Instructions:

- Find a comfortable seat.
  - Take a deep breath, hold it for a second, then exhale.
  - In your head, count down from 10 slowly: 10...9...8...7... until you reach 1.
  - Each number, take a calm breath in and out.
  - When you reach 1, check in to see how you feel. You should feel calmer and more focused.
- 

## 8. "Kind Thoughts" Card



### Instructions:

- Close your eyes and think of something kind to say to yourself, like "I am brave" or "I am strong."
- Repeat this phrase to yourself three times.
- Take a deep breath after each time you say it.
- Open your eyes and feel confident and positive.

## 9. Quick Shake Card: “Shake Out Stress”

### Instructions:

- Stand up and shake your hands for 5 seconds, letting go of any tension.
  - Then shake out your arms, shoulders, and legs.
  - Take a deep breath in and stretch your arms high above your head.
  - Exhale, relax, and notice how your body feels lighter.
- 

### TIPS FOR USE

You could print these cards and laminate them for durability, keeping them in a small basket or box in the classroom “Reset Corner.” Encourage students to choose a card and follow the instructions whenever they need a few moments to refocus or relax.





# DOMAIN

## 4 ■ COLLABORATING WITH STUDENTS & FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS

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**Categories of caregivers** of the MRD children.

**Communication strategies** for engaging with families.

**Resources** for family education and support.

**Approaches for involving students** in creating a trauma-sensitive school culture.





**THEORETICAL**

**PART.**



# THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF CAREGIVERS OF THE MRD CHILDREN

Migrant, refugee, and displaced (MRD) children often rely on various types of caregivers for support during their journey and integration into new environments. Understanding the distinctions between these caregiving roles is critical for schools and educators when fostering collaboration, building trust, and creating trauma-sensitive practices. Different categories of caregivers provide unique types of support, shaped by their relationship to the child, cultural background, and circumstances surrounding their caregiving responsibilities.

## 1. Biological Parents or Immediate Family Members

Biological parents or close family members, such as siblings or grandparents, are the primary caregivers for many MRD children. These individuals often bear the emotional, financial, and logistical burden of displacement or migration. Their ability to support the child's education and emotional well-being may be impacted by their own trauma, cultural adaptation challenges, and language barriers.

## 2. Foster or Host Families



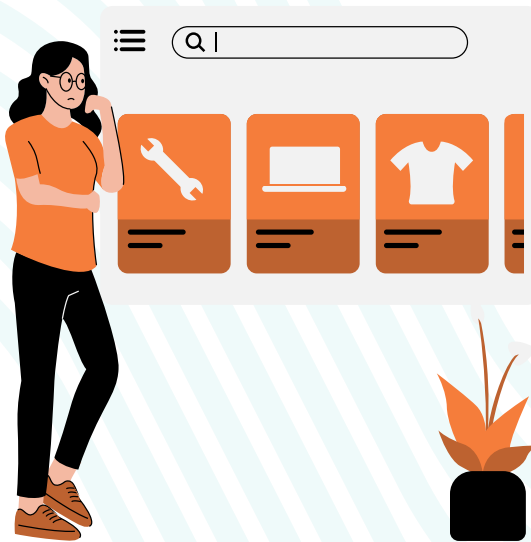
Foster or host families play a pivotal role in providing temporary or long-term care for unaccompanied minors or children separated from their biological families. These caregivers may serve as a bridge between the child and the local culture, language, and school system.

## 3. Institutional or Group Care Settings

In some cases, MRD children may reside in institutional settings, such as shelters or group homes, supervised by staff members or caregivers. These environments provide basic needs and safety but may lack the personal attention and emotional connection a familial caregiver can offer.

#### 4. Community or Extended Family Members

Community members, distant relatives, or close family friends often step in as caregivers, especially when biological parents are unavailable or struggling to provide support. These caregivers may already be established in the host country, offering stability and guidance to the child.





# COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES

Effective family's engagement is essential in creating a supportive, trauma-sensitive school environment. Families are a key part of students' lives, often shaping their resilience and coping abilities. Engaging families in trauma-informed practices requires sensitivity, openness, and culturally responsive approaches to build trust and foster collaboration.

## 1. Establishing Trust through Open and Transparent Communication:

- **Consistent Updates:** Provide regular updates about the school's trauma-informed initiatives and available supports for students, such as mental health services or SEL programs.
- **Clear Communication Channels:** Use multiple channels (e.g., email, text, parent portals, and in-person meetings) to ensure families receive timely information in a way that best suits their preferences.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** Respect students' and families' confidentiality, especially when discussing sensitive issues, to create a foundation of trust and demonstrate respect for family privacy.



## 2. Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness:

- **Culturally Sensitive Communication:** Recognize and respect diverse family backgrounds, values, and beliefs. Avoid jargon and ensure that communications are clear, accessible, and free of cultural bias.
- **Language Accessibility:** Provide all communication in the family's preferred language, using interpreters or translated documents when needed to remove language barriers.



### 3. Encouraging Two-Way Communication:

- **Opportunities for Feedback:** Regularly invite feedback from families about their experiences, students' well-being, and school policies. This can be done through surveys, feedback forms, or open discussions during parent meetings.
- **Listening to Concerns and Ideas:** Create safe spaces for families to express their concerns and ideas, showing that their insights are valued and can influence the school's approach.
- **Family Involvement in Decision-Making:** Where appropriate, include family members in decision-making processes, such as creating individualized support plans for students affected by trauma. This involvement fosters a sense of shared responsibility and commitment to student success.

### 4. Trauma-Sensitive Language and Non-Judgmental Communication:

- **Positive and Strength-Based Language:** Use language that emphasizes strengths and avoids stigmatizing terms, helping families feel respected and valued.
- **Non-Judgmental Listening:** Practice active listening with families to understand their unique situations and perspectives without making assumptions, fostering an inclusive atmosphere where families feel comfortable sharing.





# RESOURCES FOR FAMILY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT



To create a trauma-informed school environment, effective communication with families and access to supportive resources are essential. When schools establish clear, compassionate channels of communication, they empower families to actively participate in their child's educational and emotional journey. This partnership is strengthened when schools provide families with accessible resources that expand their understanding of trauma and equip them with tools to support their children at home. Equipping families with resources is crucial for creating an extended trauma-sensitive support system that reinforces the school's efforts.

Together, these communication strategies and resources create a unified approach that extends trauma-sensitive practices beyond the classroom, fostering an environment of trust, resilience, and holistic well-being for each student.

In this policy toolkit, we will provide some resources and strategies that can be used by school leaders or educators to install and reinforce this cooperation with the families.

## 1. Trauma Awareness Workshops for Families:



- **Introduction to Trauma and Its Effects:** Offer workshops or informational sessions on the basics of trauma, common symptoms, and its potential impact on children's behavior, learning, and emotional health. These sessions provide families with foundational knowledge that fosters empathy and understanding. It can be led by experts or in a form of conference.
- **Strategies for Home Support:** Educate families on practical strategies they can use at home to support their child's emotional regulation, including calming techniques, positive reinforcement, and routine-building practices.

- **Empathy and Active Listening Skills:** Include skill-building sessions that help families communicate empathetically, which is key to creating safe spaces at home.

## 2. Access to Mental Health and Wellness Resources:



- **School and Community Mental Health Resources:** Provide clear information on how families can access mental health services, including school counselors, social workers, and external therapists. Share community-based resources, such as local mental health organizations or helplines, for families in need of additional support.
- **Self-Care Resources for Families:** Recognize the importance of self-care in family members, especially caregivers, to reduce stress and burnout. Provide resources like stress management techniques, family wellness activities, and local support groups to help them maintain their well-being.

## 3. Accessible Educational Materials and Guides:

- **Trauma-Informed Parenting Guides:** Offer easy-to-understand materials on trauma-informed practices at home, including topics like setting consistent boundaries, managing emotional outbursts, and recognizing early signs of stress or trauma in children.
- **SEL Tools for Home:** Provide families with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) tools they can incorporate at home. This might include exercises for recognizing emotions, journaling prompts, mindfulness practices, and techniques to strengthen resilience in children.
- **Resource Directory:** Create a directory of local and national resources related to trauma, mental health, and family support. Include contacts for family counseling, emergency services, parenting classes, and support groups that may be helpful to families facing challenging circumstances.

#### 4. Building a Peer Support Network for Families:

- **Family Support Groups:** Facilitate the creation of parent or family support groups, where members can connect, share experiences, and provide mutual support. These groups can offer valuable insights and emotional support for families navigating trauma-related challenges especially the ones related to migration history.
- **Parent Mentorship Programs:** Pair families who have successfully engaged with trauma-informed practices with those who are just beginning their journey, fostering a mentorship dynamic that can guide newer families in creating trauma-sensitive environments at home.
- **Resource and Skills Sharing Events:** Host events where families can learn about resources, new strategies, or community initiatives and discuss best practices for supporting children impacted by trauma.
- **Mediators and Translating Resources:** Language mediators can facilitate effective communication between families and school staff, ensuring that all families fully understand and can engage with trauma-informed practices. Additionally, schools can translate key resources, including guides, newsletters, and event invitations, into the primary languages spoken by families in the community.







**PRACTICAL**

**PART.**



# ACTIVITY 1.

## SELF-CARE AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING EVENING

### OBJECTIVE

To introduce parents to self-care techniques and activities that can help them manage stress, maintain resilience, and model healthy emotional regulation for their children.

**Duration:** 1 hour



**Target group:** Families & Parents

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Calming music, yoga mats, handouts on self-care practices, resource list for local support groups.

### STEPS



**1. Introduction to Self-Care (15 minutes):** Explain the importance of self-care, especially for parents who may face stressors of supporting a child impacted by trauma.

**2. Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques (20 minutes):** Lead parents through simple exercises like deep breathing, guided visualization, or a short mindfulness session.

**3. Self-Care Brainstorm (10 minutes):** Ask parents to list their current self-care practices, then share ideas in pairs or small groups to expand their self-care toolkit.

**4. Community Resource Walk-Through (15 minutes):** Provide a list of self-care resources, such as local yoga classes, support groups, and online mental health platforms, along with guidance on how to access them.



## ACTIVITY 2.

### CREATING A SHARED RESOURCE MAP WORKSHOP

#### OBJECTIVE

To collaboratively identify community resources that support students' emotional and educational well-being and to strengthen the family-school partnership by sharing knowledge and connections.

**Duration:** 1.5 hours

**Target group:** Families & Educational staff

#### MATERIALS NEEDED



Large map of the local area, sticky notes, markers, printed resource lists, access to a computer or tablet for online resource searches.

#### STEPS

##### 1. Introduction and Purpose (10 minutes)



- Explain the goal of the workshop: to create a comprehensive resource map by pooling knowledge from families and staff. Emphasize how this shared map can help everyone feel more empowered to support students' diverse needs.

##### 2. Group Brainstorming (30 minutes)

- Divide participants into mixed groups (both staff and family members) and assign each group a category, such as mental health services, after-school programs, family counseling, or crisis support.
- Groups list known resources for their category and write them on sticky notes, which they will later place on the map. Encourage groups to discuss what services they have used, heard of, or wish to learn more about.

### 3. Building the Resource Map (20 minutes)

- Each group takes turns placing their sticky notes on the map and explaining what they've added. Staff can contribute institutional knowledge, and parents can share firsthand experiences or hidden community resources.
- If anyone has a digital resource they would like to add, a volunteer can look it up on a tablet or computer and add it to the map.

### 4. Discussion and Wrap-Up (30 minutes)

- Discuss gaps in the resources. Are there needs that aren't currently met by local resources? Encourage families and staff to brainstorm solutions for these unmet needs, whether through school initiatives or partnerships.
- Close by distributing a compiled resource directory, so each participant has a copy of the valuable resources identified.

These activities foster connections and build a collaborative community that values shared knowledge, empathy, and mutual support. Together, they strengthen the trauma-informed practices by engaging both families and school staff in meaningful, solution-oriented partnerships.





## ACTIVITY 3.

### "WALK IN MY SHOES" EMPATHY WORKSHOP

#### OBJECTIVE

To foster empathy by allowing families and staff to see situations from each other's perspectives, encouraging mutual understanding and collaborative problem-solving.

**Duration:** 1.5 hours

**Target group:** Families & Educational staff

#### MATERIAL NEEDED

Scenario cards with common school and home challenges (prepared in advance), paper, and pens.

#### STEPS

**1. Introduction (15 minutes):** Begin with a short presentation on the importance of empathy in trauma-sensitive practices, emphasizing how understanding different perspectives fosters a stronger support network for students.

**2. Scenario Role-Swap (45 minutes):**



- Divide participants into small mixed groups of families and staff.
- Each group receives a scenario card (e.g., a student acting out in class due to home stress, or a family feeling disconnected from school events). Participants then role-play as either a family member or a staff member.
- Groups discuss how they might feel in each role, potential challenges they might face, and the kind of support they would need from the other party.
- Each group presents insights from their discussions to the larger group, emphasizing strategies that each side can use to better support one another.

**3. Group Reflection and Action Planning (30 minutes):** Facilitate a group discussion on how families and staff can communicate effectively when facing similar situations. Participants co-create an action plan, listing practical ways to apply these insights in real interactions and building ongoing empathy.

## Annexes : Scenario Cards



### 1. Student with Limited National language Proficiency Struggling Academically

- **Scenario:** A student who recently moved to the country is struggling with assignments because of limited National language skills. The student feels frustrated and starts acting out in class.
- **Family Perspective:** You want to support your child's learning, but you're also struggling with language barriers and are unsure how to help them with schoolwork. You feel worried about your child's future.
- **Staff Perspective:** You want to help the student improve academically, but you have a large class and limited time. You're concerned about the student's behavior and wonder if they need additional support.

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### 2. Challenges with Peer Integration



- **Scenario:** A recently arrived student from another country finds it hard to make friends. During recess, the student often sits alone and appears lonely.
- **Family Perspective:** You worry that your child isn't making friends because they frequently mention feeling "different." You want to help but feel unsure of how to encourage social connections in a new culture.
- **Staff Perspective:** You've noticed the student's isolation and are concerned it might impact their well-being. You want to encourage them to connect with their peers but are unsure how to best support them without making them feel singled out.

### 3. Family Communication Difficulties Due to Language Barriers

- **Scenario:** A student's family, who speaks little English, has struggled to communicate with teachers about their child's progress. As a result, the student's academic needs have gone unaddressed.
  - **Family Perspective:** You're doing your best to understand the school's communication, but the language barrier makes it difficult. You worry that your child isn't getting the support they need and feel frustrated by the lack of accessible information.
  - **Staff Perspective:** You're aware of the language barrier but aren't sure how to bridge it without additional resources. You want the family to feel informed and engaged but feel unsure of how to help them overcome this challenge.
- 

### 4. Student Struggling with Trauma from Migration Experience



- **Scenario:** A student who recently migrated appears distracted, anxious, and has difficulty focusing on tasks. They seem on edge and avoid talking about their past.
  - **Family Perspective:** You know your child has gone through difficult experiences and worry about the impact on their well-being. You want to help but feel uncomfortable discussing certain aspects with the school and are unsure of available resources.
  - **Staff Perspective:** You've noticed the student's anxiety but don't want to pressure them into sharing uncomfortable details. You want to support them and wonder if the family would be open to resources or counseling, but you're unsure how to approach the topic.
- 

### 5. Financial Barriers to School Activities and Supplies



- **Scenario:** A student misses several school activities that require a fee. When asked, they explain they "forgot" or "aren't interested." The student feels embarrassed when peers talk about the events.

- **Family Perspective:** You want your child to participate fully in school life but are unable to afford some of the costs for activities and supplies. You worry that your child might feel excluded, but you're unsure how to discuss financial needs with the school.
  - **Staff Perspective:** You've noticed that the student often misses activities that require a fee. You're concerned that finances might be a barrier and want to help, but you're uncertain how to offer support without making the family feel uncomfortable.
- 

## 6. Student Exhibiting Behavioral Changes After Relocation



- **Scenario:** A student who recently relocated to the school district shows signs of restlessness and occasional disruptive behavior in class. Teachers suspect this behavior might be tied to stress from the recent move.
  - **Family Perspective:** You're aware that your child's behavior has changed since the move and feel stressed about helping them adjust. You're trying to settle into a new home, job, and community and feel overwhelmed by everything happening at once.
  - **Staff Perspective:** You're aware that moving to a new area can be stressful, especially for students, and you want to support the student's adjustment. You're unsure if you should approach the family about resources or if there's a specific support system the student might need.
- 

## 7. Differing Cultural Norms Around Discipline and Communication

- **Scenario:** A student's family practices different cultural norms around discipline and communication styles that sometimes differ from the school's expectations. Tension has arisen over a few misunderstandings.



- **Family Perspective:** You believe in discipline that's consistent with your cultural values, and you're concerned that the school might misunderstand or judge your approach. You want to be supportive but feel there's a lack of understanding.
- **Staff Perspective:** You've noticed some differences in communication and discipline expectations and want to ensure there's a mutual understanding between the family and school. You're unsure how to open a conversation about this in a way that's respectful and supportive.





# DOMAIN

## 5 ■ COLLABORATION WITH WIDER COMMUNITY

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**Ideas of activities** to engage school neighborhood.

**Tools for awareness** raising campaigns about inclusion of MRD children and trauma-sensitive school culture.



**THEORETICAL**

**PART.**



# IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE THE SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD

Fostering a trauma-sensitive school environment extends beyond the classroom, encompassing the surrounding community to create an inclusive and supportive network. Community engagement activities help build awareness and connections, ensuring that all members are aligned in creating a safe and welcoming atmosphere for students, especially those who have experienced trauma or displacement.

## 1. Community Listening Circles



Provide a platform where families, community members, and school staff can discuss their experiences, learn about trauma-sensitive practices, and share perspectives on supporting displaced children. Monthly meetings where all stakeholders come together to participate in guided conversations led by a trained facilitator. Topics include the challenges faced by Migrant, Refugee, and Displaced (MRD) students, the importance of community support, and ways the neighborhood can get involved.

## 2. Cultural Exchange Days

Celebrate the diverse backgrounds of MRD students and foster cross-cultural understanding. Organize regular events that highlight the cultures represented within the school community through food, art, music, and storytelling. Invite parents, community organizations, and local businesses to take part, fostering a sense of pride and belonging for MRD students and building empathy across the community.

## 3. Trauma-Informed Community Training Sessions



Educate the community about trauma and its impact on learning and behavior. Partner with local mental health professionals or organizations to offer workshops to parents, caregivers, and community members on the basics of

trauma and ways they can contribute to a supportive environment for students. These sessions emphasize how community support bolsters trauma-sensitive schools.

#### 4. Neighborhood Walk and Welcome Program

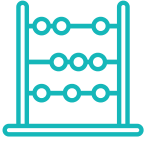
Build trust and reduce feelings of isolation among MRD students and families. Pair school staff with local neighborhood volunteers for a welcoming program where they visit the neighborhoods where MRD families live, introducing themselves and discussing available resources. The walk includes informal chats, welcoming gestures, and the distribution of resources (such as a community resource guide). This activity can help families feel more supported and included.

#### 5. School-Community Resource Fairs

Provide MRD families with easy access to resources. Host a fair that brings together organizations specializing in trauma support, health, housing, language acquisition, and employment services. This event not only provides necessary support but also demonstrates to MRD families that the school is an active, resourceful partner in their success and well-being.



# TOOLS FOR AWARENESS



## RAISING CAMPAIGNS ABOUT INCLUSION OF MIGRANT, REFUGEE, AND DISPLACED (MRD) CHILDREN AND TRAUMA-SENSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

Raising awareness about trauma sensitivity, inclusion, and cultural diversity is vital in creating a school culture where every student feels valued. Awareness campaigns educate the school community and create an environment that actively supports trauma-sensitive policies and practices.

Here are some tools that could be elaborated within school context to reach the wider community:

- **Tool 1: Student-Led Awareness Videos**



Student-created videos highlighting the importance of inclusion and trauma-sensitive culture. The purpose of this tool is that students collaborate to produce short video clips featuring interviews, stories, and educational content about MRD students' experiences. These videos can be shared during school assemblies, parent-teacher meetings, and on school social media, helping to humanize the experiences of MRD students and highlight the value of trauma-informed practices within schools hosting them.

- **Tool 2: Educational Posters and Infographics**

Visual displays around the school that share facts, myths, and insights about trauma, resilience, and MRD inclusion. The purpose is to create vibrant, informative posters and infographics to place around the school, including in the entrance and high-traffic areas. Topics might include "Understanding Trauma and Its Impact on Learning" or "How to introduce Policy of Diversity in the Classroom". These visuals reinforce awareness of trauma-sensitive culture and inclusion daily.

- **Tool 3: Trauma-Informed Practices Workshop Series**

A series of interactive workshops for students, staff, and community members. The purpose is that workshops cover topics like cultural sensitivity, trauma awareness, and the impact of forced migration on learning and behavior. Include hands-on activities and role-plays to illustrate concepts, encouraging participants to reflect on how they can contribute to a more inclusive, trauma-sensitive school.

- **Tool 4: Monthly “Inclusion Focus” Newsletter**

A monthly newsletter distributed to parents, students, and community stakeholders. The purpose is that each issue focuses on a different aspect of trauma sensitivity and inclusion, featuring success stories, MRD student perspectives, relevant resources, and tips for fostering inclusivity and diversity within classrooms. It’s an ongoing reminder of the school’s commitment to trauma-sensitive practices and MRD support.

- **Tool 5: Digital Storytelling Initiatives**



An online blog or video series featuring the experiences of MRD students, families, and allies within the school. This series allows MRD students (or those willing to share their stories) to convey their journeys in their own voices, giving the school community insight into the resilience of these students and breaking down stereotypes. Topics can range from challenges in adapting to a new culture to positive experiences at the school.

- **Tool 6: “Kindness and Empathy” Campaigns**



School-wide campaigns encouraging acts of kindness, empathy, and understanding. These campaigns reinforce the message that each student can contribute to a supportive, trauma-sensitive environment. Initiatives could include kindness challenges, empathy-building exercises, and the “Peer Encouragement Program,” where students anonymously share words of encouragement or compliments among them.



# DOMAIN

## 6 ■ ASSESSING NEEDS & PROVIDING SUPPORT

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**Tools** for identifying the efficiency of the use of SEL methods within school environment

**Checklists and templates** for monitoring student progress while using the SEL technics.





**THEORETICAL**

**PART.**

To ensure trauma-sensitive practices are effective and meaningful in schools, it is vital to implement processes for assessing needs and providing continuous support. This domain focuses on evaluating the impact and utility of social-emotional learning (SEL) methods, alongside creating structures to monitor student progress. This approach enables educators to understand what works, identify areas for improvement, and ensure students are consistently receiving the support they need to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

### **1. Importance of Assessment and Support in SEL Implementation**

Assessing the needs and progress of students within a trauma-informed and SEL-focused school environment ensures that educational interventions are aligned with students' emotional, social, and academic needs. By evaluating the effectiveness of SEL practices, schools can adapt their strategies to be more responsive and inclusive, especially for migrant, refugee, and displaced (MRD) students who may face unique challenges. Systematic assessment promotes accountability, improves teacher efficacy, and empowers students to succeed through tailored support.

### **2. The Role of Tools and Instruments in SEL Assessment**



Effective assessment of SEL practices and student progress requires specific tools and methods that measure the impact of interventions, student engagement, emotional well-being, and skill development. These tools help educators and school leaders make informed decisions about adapting SEL strategies, identify gaps in current practices, and highlight successful initiatives that can be scaled or replicated.

### **3. Continuous Monitoring and Data-Driven Support**



Monitoring student progress with checklists, templates, and observation tools allows for a comprehensive understanding of each student's development in SEL competencies. This continuous feedback loop not only enhances individual support but also informs whole-school policies and practices. Ongoing evaluation ensures that students' evolving needs are met effectively, fostering a safe, inclusive, and trauma-sensitive environment.



**PRACTICAL**

**PART.**



## A - ASSESSING NEEDS & PROVIDING SUPPORT

Within this practical part, we will provide of some ideas of measurement tools that can be used.

### 1. TOOLS FOR IDENTIFYING THE EFFICIENCY OF SEL METHODS WITHIN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- **SEL Impact Surveys for Students and Staff**

Develop and administer surveys that gauge student and teacher perceptions of SEL program effectiveness. Surveys can ask students to reflect on their experiences with SEL activities, the relevance of activities to their lives, and the extent to which these lessons have helped them manage emotions, resolve conflicts, or build positive relationships. For teachers, the survey can include questions about observed changes in student behavior, ease of integrating SEL methods into lessons, and perceived barriers to implementation.

- **Observation Rubrics for Classroom SEL Practices**

Use observation rubrics to evaluate the use of SEL techniques within classrooms. Criteria may include the frequency and quality of teacher-led SEL activities, student engagement and participation, and integration of trauma-sensitive strategies. This data can be used for feedback and professional development.

- **Focus Groups and Interviews** 

Organize focus groups and individual interviews with students, teachers, and parents to gain a deeper understanding of the strengths and challenges associated with SEL practices. These discussions can reveal nuanced insights and actionable feedback and it could be repeated regularly to monitor the progress.

## 2. CHECKLISTS AND TEMPLATES FOR MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS WHILE USING SEL TECHNIQUES

- **Student SEL Competency Checklist**

Develop checklists that allow teachers to track individual students' progress in key SEL competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Teachers can update these checklists at regular intervals to monitor growth and identify areas requiring additional support.

***Here you go with an example of a SEL competency checklist for students:***

This checklist is designed to help educators monitor individual student progress across the five core Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Teachers can use it periodically (e.g., monthly or quarterly) to assess students' growth, set goals, and provide targeted support.





**Student name:**

**Date:**

**Grade/Class:**

### 1. Self-Awareness

- Recognizes and labels emotions in self (e.g., can say when they are happy, sad, frustrated, etc.)
- Identifies personal strengths and areas for growth
- Expresses confidence in their abilities (e.g., "I believe I can do this")
- Is able to describe their feelings and thoughts accurately

### 2. Self-Regulation

- Uses strategies to manage strong emotions (e.g., deep breathing, taking a break)
- Follows classroom rules and routines with minimal reminders
- Demonstrates impulse control (e.g., waits their turn, thinks before acting)
- Perseveres through challenging tasks without giving up too quickly

### 3. Social Awareness

- Shows empathy towards peers (e.g., offers help to a classmate in need)
- Understands and respects differences in others (e.g., cultural, ability-based differences)
- Listens attentively to others when they speak
- Demonstrates understanding of social cues and norms (e.g., knows when to speak or listen)



#### 4. Relationship Skills

- Communicates clearly and respectfully with peers and adults
- Resolves conflicts in a positive manner (e.g., uses “I” statements, seeks adult help when needed)
- Works well in groups (e.g., shares tasks, respects others’ opinions)
- Develops and maintains positive friendships

#### 5. Responsible Decision-Making

- Identifies solutions to simple problems and evaluates possible outcomes
- Accepts responsibility for their actions (e.g., apologizes when wrong)
- Follows through on commitments and tasks
- Makes decisions that reflect safety, ethical considerations, and fairness

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:

1. **Mark each competency based on your observations of the student.** Use this tool during class activities, individual interactions, and group settings to get a holistic view.
2. **Track changes over time.** Conduct assessments at regular intervals to note progress and areas that need targeted support.
3. **Involve the student.** For older students, consider sharing the checklist with them as part of a reflective conversation.
4. **Collaborate with families.** Share progress with families and involve them in supporting SEL goals at home.

## PROGRESS SUMMARY

**Areas of  
Strength:**

**Areas for  
Improvement/  
Focus:**

**Next  
Steps/Goals:**

**Teacher  
Comments:**



**ENABLE**



## • Weekly/Monthly Reflection Templates

Provide students with reflection templates that encourage them to self-assess their emotional and social growth. Prompts might include questions like, “What emotion did you manage well this week?” or “How did you work through a difficult situation with a classmate?” Teachers can review these templates to gain insights into students’ SEL journeys.

***Here you go with an example of a weekly or monthly reflection template for students:***





**Student name:**

**Date:**

**Grade/Class:**

## PART 1: REFLECTING ON YOUR EMOTIONS AND REACTIONS

### 1. This Week/Month, I Felt... (Circle or color all that apply)

Happy	Sad	Angry
Calm	Stressed	Confient
Frustrated	Hopeful	Other:

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### 2. Think of a Moment When You Felt a Strong Emotion



- What happened? (Briefly describe the situation)

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- How did you respond to the situation?

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- Was this response helpful or unhelpful? Explain.

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**3. Did You Try Any Strategies to Manage Your Emotions?**  
(Check any you used)

<input type="checkbox"/> Depp Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Talking to Someone	<input type="checkbox"/> Taking a break
<input type="checkbox"/> Counting to 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Using Positive Self-Talk	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

---

**PART 2: BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

**1. Describe a Positive Interaction You Had with a Peer or Teacher This Week/Month. What made it positive?**

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**2. Think of a Moment When You Felt a Strong Emotion**

- If yes, how did you try to resolve it?

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- What might you do differently next time?

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**PART 3: GOAL SETTING AND PROGRESS**

**1. Last Week/Month, My SEL Goal Was: (If applicable)**

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---



## 2. Did You Make Progress Toward Your Goal?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

Explain your progress or what made it difficult:

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## 3. Set a New SEL Goal for the Upcoming Week/Month:

My new goal is: \_\_\_\_\_

To reach this goal, I will: \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART 4: GENERAL FEEDBACK

### 1. What Activities or Strategies Helped You Feel Supported This Week/Month?

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### 2. What Would You Like More Help With?

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- **Behavioral and Emotional Tracking Sheets**

Create templates for recording observable behaviors related to SEL goals (e.g., improved peer interactions, conflict resolution, reduction in disciplinary incidents). Tracking sheets enable teachers to spot trends, celebrate successes, and provide targeted interventions when needed.

***Here you go with an example of a behavioral and emotional tracking sheet template for students:***





**Student name:**

**Date:**

**Grade/Class:**

### Instructions

- Mark observed behaviors daily or at relevant intervals using checkmarks or short notes in the "Notes" column.
- Use codes to indicate the level of concern (e.g., 1 = No Concern, 2 = Mild Concern, 3 = Moderate Concern, 4 = High Concern).
- Add comments for context where necessary.

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### Key Elements of the Tracking Sheet:

- **Date:** Records when the observation occurred.
- **Behavior/Emotion:** Names the specific behavior or emotional response observed (e.g., anxiety, aggression, withdrawal).
- **Description of Behavior/Emotion:** Provides context to better understand the situation and potential triggers.
- **Level of Concern (1-4):** Quantifies the level of concern, enabling educators to prioritize interventions.
- **Intervention/Response Taken:** Describes any action taken to address or support the behavior/emotion.
- **Notes/Comments:** Allows space for additional context, follow-up notes, or other observations.



You can find an example of the table filled:

This sheet can be customized based on specific school needs and the types of behaviors or emotions most relevant to the student population. It helps create a systematic way of understanding student needs and measuring progress over time.

Date	Behavior/Emotion	Description Behavior/Emotion	Level of Concern (1-4)	Intervention/Response Taken	Notes/Comments
01/1 0/24	Emotional Outburst	Angry outburst after group activity.	3	One-on-one discussion with counselor	Seemed upset about being excluded.
02/1 0/24	Peer Interaction	Positive engagement during recess.	1	Positive reinforcement (praise)	Showed leadership and kindness.
03/1 0/24	Task Completion	Refused to complete in-class work.	2	Allowed a short break; re-engaged	Expressed frustration with difficulty of task.
04/1 0/24	Self-Regulation	Used deep breathing during stress.	1	Encouraged and praised effort	Practiced SEL technique from morning session.
05/1 0/24	Participation	Did not speak up in group discussion.	2	Paired with supportive peer	Appeared anxious; monitored for next activity.



### 3. PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT SEL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

#### • CLASSROOM “PULSE CHECK”

Regularly asking students to express how they are feeling at the start and end of each day, using tools like mood meters or a “feelings board,” provides valuable insights into their emotional states. By consistently tracking these expressions, teachers can observe patterns in mood shifts, which can reveal how students are responding to the social-emotional learning (SEL) practices being implemented. Over time, these mood patterns can help identify areas where SEL strategies are effective and where adjustments may be needed, allowing for more tailored support for each student's emotional well-being.

*Here you go with an example of a classroom pulse check activity:*

#### OBJECTIVE:

To create a safe space where students can regularly express their feelings and emotions, helping teachers gauge the classroom's overall emotional climate while identifying individual students who may need extra support.

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes (at the beginning or end of class)



#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Whiteboard or large chart paper
- Sticky notes, magnets, or individual student cards
- Pre-designed “Feelings Scale” or “Mood Meter” poster

#### ACTIVITY STEPS:

##### 1. Introduce the Pulse Check (2 minutes):

- Explain to students that a “Pulse Check” is a quick way to share how they're feeling and helps the teacher understand the general mood of the classroom. Emphasize that all responses are valid and that it's a judgment-free activity.



## 2. Create a Feelings Board (1 minute):

- On the whiteboard or chart paper, draw a simple chart with different categories of feelings such as:
  - Happy / Excited / Energized
  - Calm / Content / Focused
  - Anxious / Nervous / Stressed
  - Sad / Upset / Frustrated
- Alternatively, use a “Mood Meter” with color zones (e.g., Red = high energy/negative feelings, Blue = low energy/negative feelings, Green = positive feelings, Yellow = high energy/positive feelings).



## 3. Student Check-In (2-4 minutes):

- Ask each student to place a sticky note, magnet, or card with their name (or a symbol representing them) in the category that best represents their current mood.
- For younger students, you can use emojis or drawings instead of text categories.
- Remind students that they can be as general or specific as they like—no one is required to explain unless they want to.

## 4. Optional Quick Discussion (3 minutes):

- Once all students have participated, briefly acknowledge trends you see, such as, “I see that many of us are feeling a bit stressed today. Let’s take a moment to do a quick breathing exercise to reset.”
- If time permits, you can invite students to share why they chose a particular category if they feel comfortable.

## 5. Teacher Reflection and Support:



- Use the pulse check results to identify any students who may need additional support or a private conversation. For example, if a student consistently reports feeling anxious or sad, consider connecting with them individually to offer support.

## ADDITIONAL TIPS:

- **Make It Routine:** Conducting a pulse check regularly (e.g., daily or weekly) builds trust and provides students with a consistent opportunity to reflect on their emotions.
- **Privacy Options:** If some students feel uncomfortable sharing their mood publicly, create an anonymous option using numbered cards or a private journal entry.
- **Adapt to Needs:** Adapt the categories based on your students' age group and emotional literacy levels. For example, younger children may benefit from simpler categories like "happy" or "sad," while older students may explore more nuanced feelings.

## • TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PEER FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Schedule time for teachers to reflect on their own SEL teaching practices and receive constructive feedback from peers. This helps ensure that SEL is implemented consistently and effectively across classrooms.

By employing these tools, checklists, and structured activities, schools can effectively assess the use and impact of SEL methods, ensuring that every student receives the tailored support they need to succeed.

***Here you go with an example of teacher self-assessment and peer feedback sessions:***

### OBJECTIVE:

To provide teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) practices, receive constructive feedback from colleagues, and identify areas for improvement or additional support. This activity aims to foster a collaborative professional environment where teachers learn from one another, improve SEL delivery, and strengthen trauma-informed practices.

## SESSION OUTLINE:



### 1. Preparation Phase (Before the Session)

- **Schedule and Notify:** Sessions should be scheduled at regular intervals (e.g., monthly or quarterly). Notify teachers well in advance to allow adequate preparation.
- **Self-Assessment Checklist:** Provide teachers with a standardized SEL Self-Assessment Checklist to complete beforehand. The checklist might include prompts such as:
  - How often do I integrate SEL activities into my lessons?
  - Do I use trauma-sensitive language and strategies consistently?
  - What challenges do I face when trying to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, including MRD students?
  - In what areas do I feel confident? Where do I need more support?

### 2. Opening the Session (15-20 Minutes)

- **Welcome and Norm-Setting:** The facilitator (e.g., a school counselor or lead teacher) welcomes participants and reviews ground rules for respectful, constructive feedback. Emphasize that the purpose is growth-oriented and non-judgmental.
- **Sharing Goals:** Each teacher briefly shares one specific goal related to their SEL practice that they would like to focus on during the session.

### 3. Teacher Self-Reflection Presentation (10-15 Minutes Per Teacher)

- **Self-Assessment Sharing:** Each teacher presents their completed self-assessment, including what they perceive as strengths and areas for growth in their SEL practice.
- **Classroom Example:** Teachers are encouraged to share a specific example of a recent SEL lesson, strategy, or challenge (e.g., how they managed a conflict between students using SEL techniques or implemented a morning check-in).

#### 4. Peer Feedback and Discussion (15-20 Minutes Per Teacher)

- **Peer Feedback Round:** Colleagues offer constructive feedback on the presenting teacher’s SEL practice. Feedback should be framed positively and focus on observed strengths, suggestions for improvement, and potential new strategies.
  - Example questions peers might consider:
    - What worked well in the described scenario?
    - Are there any additional strategies that could enhance the SEL impact?
    - What support or resources could be helpful?
- **Group Brainstorming:** Peers can brainstorm specific solutions for challenges, such as methods to engage quieter students in SEL activities or ways to address disruptive behavior using trauma-informed practices.

#### 5. Collaborative Planning (10-15 Minutes)

- **Action Plan Creation:** Teachers create or update an action plan based on the feedback received. This plan might include trying out a new strategy, seeking additional training, or collaborating with another teacher.
- **Commitment Statement:** Teachers briefly share one commitment for their next steps, such as “I will incorporate at least two peer mediation sessions next month” or “I will ask for additional resources for MRD support.”

#### 6. Follow-Up and Reflection

- **Scheduled Check-Ins:** Plan for short follow-up meetings where teachers can discuss their progress with implementing changes or seek additional support.

#### EXAMPLE SCENARIO:



- Teacher A presents a challenge with engaging MRD students in SEL discussions, noting language barriers as a significant obstacle.

- During the feedback round, **Teacher B** suggests using visuals and incorporating culturally relevant content to make SEL more inclusive and relatable. **Teacher C** shares a personal experience of working with a bilingual assistant to facilitate communication.
- **Action Plan:** Teacher A commits to creating visual aids for SEL lessons and exploring partnerships with a bilingual support staff member for targeted sessions.

By providing a structured yet flexible framework, these sessions encourage self-reflection, peer learning, and continuous improvement, ensuring a consistent and effective SEL approach within the trauma-sensitive school environment.





# DOMAIN

7

■ POLICY  
RECOMMENDATIONS



# A- TEACHERS WORKING WITH MIGRANT, REFUGEE, AND DISPLACED (MRD) STUDENTS

Teachers are on the front lines in creating a trauma-sensitive classroom experience. Their daily interactions with MRD students shape students' sense of safety, belonging, and academic confidence.

## 1. Integrate Trauma Awareness and Emotional Literacy into Classroom Practices



Encourage open discussions on emotions and self-regulation techniques with students. Introducing emotional literacy through activities such as the “Emotion Wheel” helps students articulate their feelings and understand each other’s experiences, fostering an environment of empathy and support.

## 2. Use Restorative Approaches in Addressing Behavioral Challenges

Approach discipline with empathy by implementing restorative practices that focus on understanding and addressing the root causes of behavior. This reduces punitive responses and allows students to learn from conflicts in a constructive, supportive way.

## 3. Establish Clear Routines and Predictable Classroom Procedures

Trauma-sensitive classrooms benefit from predictable routines, which help students feel secure. Providing visual schedules, giving advance notice of changes, and allowing flexibility in classroom structure can help students impacted by trauma feel more at ease and engaged.

## 4. Encourage Positive Peer Relationships and Inclusive Group Activities

Promote activities that foster collaboration and peer support, such as group projects and peer mentoring, to build a sense of community. For MRD students, these positive interactions with classmates can strengthen their sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation.



# B- SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

School administrators have a direct influence on implementing trauma-sensitive practices and creating an inclusive school culture. The following recommendations guide school leaders in fostering a supportive environment for students affected by trauma.

## 1. Develop and Implement Trauma-Sensitive School Policies

School leaders should establish policies that address the needs of students experiencing trauma, such as restorative discipline approaches, flexible attendance policies, and safe spaces within the school. Clear, trauma-sensitive policies can help students feel safe and supported.

## 2. Prioritize Professional Development in Trauma-Informed Practices

School leaders should ensure that all staff, from teachers to support personnel, receive training in trauma-informed approaches and about SEL programs. Regular workshops and refresher courses can help maintain a consistent understanding of trauma and provide practical tools for staff to support students effectively.

## 3. Promote a Culture of Inclusivity and Policy of Diversity in School Settings



Foster an environment that celebrates diversity, encourages empathy, and values the unique experiences of MRD students. School leaders should organize school-wide activities that promote understanding, such as diversity celebrations and empathy workshops, to create a cohesive and inclusive school community.

## 4. Establish Support Networks for Teachers and Staff



Provide mental health resources and peer support networks for teachers and staff working closely with MRD students. Supportive networks reduce stress and improve teacher resilience, allowing them to support students more effectively.





## C- NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS (MINISTRIES, MUNICIPALITIES, EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS)

To create sustainable and comprehensive trauma-informed support in schools, national stakeholders play a critical role in policy development, funding allocation, and resource provision. Here are some recommendations

### **1. Incorporate Trauma-Informed Practices and SEL programs in National Education Policies**

Ministries of education should mandate trauma-informed training and practices as part of national education policies. They should support SEL strategies by incorporating SEL into the school curriculum and engaging the entire school community (teachers, families, and students). This could include specific guidelines for supporting MRD students and ensuring that trauma sensitivity becomes a core component of school culture.

### **2. Establish Funding Programs for Trauma-Sensitive Resources and Training**



Provide dedicated funding streams to schools and other educational institutions to support trauma-informed programs. Funds can support staff training, mental health resources, classroom accommodations, and community outreach initiatives, especially in areas with a high number of MRD students.

### **3. Foster Interagency Collaboration for Comprehensive Student Support**

Facilitate partnerships between schools, healthcare providers, and social services to ensure that MRD students have access to mental health, social, and legal support. Cross-sector collaboration can enhance schools' capacity to respond effectively to the complex needs of MRD students.

## 4. Create Monitoring and Evaluation Standards for Trauma-Informed Programs

Develop national standards for monitoring the effectiveness of trauma-informed practices in schools. Regular assessments and data collection can help identify areas for improvement and support evidence-based policy adjustments.



## D- EUROPEAN STAKEHOLDERS (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA, COUNCIL OF EUROPE)



To foster a consistent and impactful approach to trauma-sensitive education across member states, European stakeholders play a pivotal role in creating unified policies, encouraging cross-border collaboration, and providing essential resources. These recommendations aim to build upon EU frameworks, such as the European Education Area's focus on well-being in schools and the EU Council Recommendations on Pathways to School Success. Here are some recommendations:

### **1. Establish European Guidelines for Trauma-Informed Education and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**

European institutions should work together to create shared guidelines on trauma-informed practices and SEL that align with the diversity of needs across member states. These guidelines should include recommended practices for supporting migrant, refugee, and displaced (MRD) students and should encourage schools and other educational institutions to adopt a trauma-sensitive culture that prioritizes emotional well-being.

### **2. Create Funding Programs for Cross-Border Training and Resources in Trauma-Sensitive Practices**

Designate specific funding from programs such as Erasmus+ and the European Social Fund to support trauma-informed initiatives, with an emphasis on training, curriculum resources, and school-wide programs. These resources should focus on areas with a high concentration of MRD students and promote equity in educational access and mental health support.

### **3. Promote Regional and Cross-Border Networks for Knowledge Exchange**

Support the development of regional networks and exchange programs for educators, school leaders, and policymakers to share knowledge, strategies, and successes in trauma-informed practices. By connecting schools, municipalities, and NGOs across borders, European stakeholders can promote the consistent application of trauma-informed education and leverage diverse experiences.

### **4. Develop Standards for Evaluating and Reporting on Trauma-Informed Programs at the European Level**

Establish European standards for evaluating trauma-informed programs in schools, which member states can adapt to their national contexts. Regular assessment and data sharing on trauma-sensitive practices will foster transparency, help identify effective strategies and encourage evidence-based adaptations to better meet the needs of all students, especially MRD populations.

These recommendations provide a roadmap for fostering trauma-informed, supportive school environments, encouraging stakeholders at every level to play an active role in building trauma-sensitive schools. By working collaboratively, EU and national leaders, school administrators, and teachers can create a robust support system that empowers all students' success and well-being.



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# ENABLE



Co-funded by  
the European Union

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**Disclaimer:** This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project Number: 2022-1-FR01-KA220-SCH-000087053