

# Social Emotional Learning Talking Points

## Background & Relevant Action Team Long-Term goals

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Ten action teams involving cross-sector leaders and staff are currently working to support resiliency and access to mental health services in the Northwest Michigan Community Health Innovation Region. The work is ongoing and action teams shift based on priorities, and twice a year participate in a summit to share accomplishments and plan for upcoming work. This action team is one of several teams working towards well-being and resiliency goals including promoting positive nurturing experiences, reducing risk, and strengthening community.

### One goal specific to this team includes:

- Enhance social and emotional skills, or competencies, across the lifespan
  - Establish common language around social and emotional competencies across the community
  - Establish a systematic way to distribute materials and educate stakeholders on how they might use the material in support of accomplishing the goals These talking points were developed for anyone who has learned about and is supporting the goals of the action team
  - Consider tailoring the examples provided under “What is Social and Emotional Learning and Competencies” below to the audience you are speaking to

## Main Messages

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- Social and emotional learning builds lifelong, future-ready skills through the social and emotional competencies
- Social and emotional learning is urgently needed now to support the well-being of all children and adults
- Social and emotional learning reinforces the competencies and improves academic achievement and social outcomes
- Parents overwhelmingly support social and emotional learning



This is the work of the Enhance Social Emotional Competencies Action Team, one of the 10 Northwest CHIR's Behavioral Health Initiative Action Teams. Action Teams consist of cross sector partners willing and able to take action collectively and supported by the CHIR BBO staff. Learn more about the [CHIR](#) and the [Behavioral Health Initiative](#), and stay connected by subscribing [here](#).

# What are Social Emotional Learning & Social Emotional Competencies?

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Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as the process through which all infants, toddlers, young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. Social Emotional Competencies, or skills, are the specific skills acquired during social emotional learning.

## There are five social and emotional competencies or skills:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.
  - For example, if one is assigned a task they don't want to do, it is productive to recognize one's resentment about that and how that affects task performance and relationships.
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal or academic goals.
  - For instance, if one is playing a game and losing, controlling one's disappointment will help maintain good relationships.
- **Responsible decision-making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.
  - Common examples include controlling the urge to drive while under the influence of alcohol, refrain from shoplifting, and complete a test without copying answers from a neighbor.
- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting unwanted or inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
  - For example, listening during a conversation without interrupting is respectful.
- **Social Awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
  - For instance, it is not considered ethical to lie when asked a direct question or when completing a job application.

## What are the benefits of strong social emotional competencies?

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*Social and emotional competencies benefit children and are associated with:*

- Higher four-year graduation rate
- Higher college completion rate
- Higher grade point average
- Reduction in the number of students retained
- Fewer required special services
- Fewer discipline referrals

*Learning strong social and emotional competencies in childhood benefits them as they grow into adulthood and is associated with:*

- Better physical and mental health
- More employment opportunities
- Less likely to engage in substance abuse
- Fewer relationship problems

*Strong social and emotional competencies among citizens benefit the community and are associated with:*

- Lower crime
- Fewer required public assistance services
- Less risky behavior and addiction
- Higher employment and higher tax revenue
- A return on investment between \$11 and \$21 based on individual development, future earnings, and decreased expenditure on services