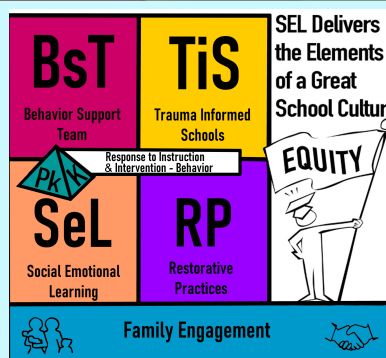


Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a process through which adults and children learn to recognize and manage emotions, demonstrate care and concern for others, develop positive relationships, make good decisions, and behave ethically, respectfully, and responsibly.



Having Conversations with your Students after a Tragic Event or Loss Connecting with Your Students When the News is Scary

We are increasingly bombarded with news that is scary today such as covid, political upheaval, racial injustice, acts of violence, or other tragedies. Children are not immune to this. They too see and hear these stories in the media, and educators and parents often seek guidance and resources for how to effectively engage in conversations and offer support. It's important that we acknowledge the scary things that happen in our world and allow space for processing. Below are a few simple suggestions to help.

- 1) Give yourself time to process first and engage in self-care as needed so you can stay emotionally regulated when you approach the topic with your students.
- 2) Monitor and regulate exposure to media sources in the classroom (and when appropriate non-judgmentally and supportively suggest to caregivers that they monitor their child's exposure).
- 3) Start by asking students questions about what they're seeing, what they think the story is about, and how they're feeling about it. Allow plenty of wait time for students to respond and actively listen to their responses before offering information.
- 4) After they've had a chance to express their voice, give students facts and context. Don't shy away from telling them the truth and give simple answers but be sure to lead with the reassuring stuff - such as that this event is rare or happened far away. Reassure your students that you care about them and they are safe here.
- 5) Avoid easy answers and labels when students ask hard questions, such as why people do bad things or bad things happen. Focus on the helpers, and that there are good people in the world.
- 6) Encourage students to tell their own version of the story and help them understand that media is constructed. Making positive meaning in the aftermath of scary stories or adversity is one of the best ways to promote resilience. Allow them to process through drawing, play, or other outlets.
- 7) Don't just talk about it – find a way to take action with your students. Write letters or thank you notes to the helpers, gather donations, participate in local activism, and empower them (and avoid feelings of helplessness) by telling them that their voice matters.

These tips were partially derived from the sources below. If you'd like to learn more, check out these great articles about talking to kids about difficult things: [Talking to Children After a Traumatic Event](#) by Smithsonian and [What to Say to Kids When the News is Scary](#) by NPR Up First Life Kit

Mission Statement: We strive to become a district where stakeholders are invested in the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic success of all students. Within MNPS, we focus on building relationships and the capacity for adults to create a positive, welcoming, and healthy environment where students feel known and valued. We want all students to experience high-quality quality instruction through engaged learning in a safe and supportive environment.

Practices to support a unified culture and safe climate for all

Unity Practices	How to or what to do	Resources
<p>Set the Tone for positive classroom culture/climate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit Shared Agreements/ Rules/Procedures • Conduct community-building circles • Build in cooperative learning games • Allow students to express their feelings • <i>Talk to your Pre-K coach, Behavior, Social Emotional Learning, or Restorative Practice Specialist if you need support creating a safe classroom, crafting prompts for circles, or guidelines on how to conduct a circle.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Resources • Creating a Safe Classroom • Perspective – Six ways adults can help children make sense of a divisive election • Pre-K Strategies <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyla Krengel: Director of Social and Emotional Learning: kyla.krengel@mnps.org
<p>Engagement Preparation Reinforce SEL lessons/activities with intentionality and purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage students in regular breathing exercises to manage stress and difficult emotions • Teach Perspective-Taking and Empathy • Teach and practice respectful discourse • Model SEL (Be positive, be calm, be reassuring- be their champion) • Provide reassurance of support to families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind Yeti • Mindfulness Resources • Yoga and Mindfulness • Sanford Harmony • Jesse Lewis Choose Love • Fostering Civil Discourse • Second Step <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyla Krengel: Director of Social and Emotional Learning: kyla.krengel@mnps.org • Megan Cusson-Lark: Executive Director of School Counseling Services: megan.cusson-lark@mnps.org • Mary Crnobori: Coordinator of Trauma-Informed Schools: mary.crnobori@mnps.org
<p>Lesson Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a supportive learning environment that centers on SEL and equity • Provide opportunities to share and listen to how your students are feeling and experiencing what is happening • Allow students to have independent processing time • Promote collective well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Supportive Environments • Addressing Race and Trauma In The Classroom • Speak Up At School <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyla Krengel: Director of Social and Emotional Learning: kyla.krengel@mnps.org • Demonica Coverson: Director of Social Services: Demonica.Coverson@mnps.org
<p>Family Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your child feel safe after the event. • Try to remain calm when discussing what happened. • Share information about what happened. • Be brief, honest, and allow the child to ask questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event • Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma • Cómo apoyar la recuperación después de un trauma <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen well. • Monitor your child’s social media and phone usage to make sure they are getting support not further agitation from friends and peers. • Accept that all people process differently. If your child isn’t ready to talk about it ask if there are other ways you can support them. • It’s ok to say “I don’t know.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mariana Merritt: Coordinator of Family Engagement: Mariana.Merritt@mnps.org
<p>Recognize Signs of Stress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many students & staff are upset and worried about potential policy changes that will affect their lives • Check-in with students and notice changes in behavior, academics, social interactions, and attendance - get help if concerned • If the student needs additional support(s), have your school counselor submit a Collaborative Referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (nctsn.org) • Coping with Anxiety • MNPS Community Resource Guide <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Crnobori: Coordinator of Trauma-Informed Schools: mary.crnobori@mnps.org • Demonica Coverson: Director of Social Services: Demonica.Coverson@mnps.org • Megan Cusson-Lark: Executive Director of School Counseling Services: megan.cusson-lark@mnps.org • Tie Hodack: Director of Exceptional Education Tieawasa.Hodack@mnps.org •
<p>Double Down on Anti-Bullying Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic changes have occurred. It is through education that we can better deal with this change and the issues that may arise, including bullying behaviors. • To prevent bullying, encourage more dialogue about deep differences and bias in our country around race, ethnicity, and class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciating Diversity and Keeping Schools Safe • How Empowering Bystanders Can Prevent Bullying <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonica Coverson: Director of Social Services: Demonica.Coverson@mnps.org • Kyla Krengel: Director of Social and Emotional Learning: kyla.krengel@mnps.org
<p>Encourage Courage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning how to be courageous doesn't mean not being afraid. It means learning to do things despite your fear. • Courage is rarely talked about; but students should talk and think about it because now more than ever is the time for us to come into our own, stand up for our beliefs and be proud of who we are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Tolerance • Good Character <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonica Coverson: Director of Social Services: Demonica.Coverson@mnps.org • Megan Cusson-Lark: Executive Director of School Counseling Services: megan.cusson-lark@mnps.org

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie Hodack: Director of Exceptional Education Tieawasa.Hodack@mnps.org
<p>Be Ready for A Crisis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of a crisis or hate crime within the school or surrounding community - ensure your school has a plan and knows how to get help. • How a school responds in a crisis is a true measure of the school's culture. 	<p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonica Coverson: Director of Social Services: Demonica.Coverson@mnps.org • Stephanie Davis: Coordinator Safe and Drug Free Schools: stephanie.davis@mnps.org • Tie Hodack: Director of Exceptional Education Tieawasa.Hodack@mnps.org
<p>Talking to Students About Traumatic Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When bad things happen, it's so important that we know how to talk to our students about it. • Our natural inclination may be to not acknowledge that anything happened at all (out of fear that it will cause more upset), or catastrophize the event even more (out of empathy or because we ourselves are stressed worried) - but there is a middle way that can best support students' social emotional health and help them process the hard things that happen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tips for Having Conversations with Students About Tragic Events • Connecting with Students when the News is Scary • Talking to Children About a Traumatic Event • Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event <p><i>For additional resources or support, contact:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Crnabori: Coordinator of Trauma-Informed Schools: mary.crnabori@mnps.org • Demonica Coverson: Director of Social Services: Demonica.Coverson@mnps.org • Megan Cusson-Lark: Executive Director of School Counseling Services: megan.cusson-lark@mnps.org