

Social Emotional Learning at Home

SEL for Parents and Families



SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL.org).

This week's SEL focus is ***Self - Awareness***...

As parents, you are the first teachers of SEL for your children. Therefore, to help your children develop *self-awareness*, it is important to talk about feelings everyday, both your feelings and your children's feelings. Being *self aware* is the ability of your child to know and understand themselves and how they fit into their family, their community and their world.

How do you develop Self-Awareness in yourself and in your child?

- The best thing you can do is to be honest about how you're feeling. When we have honest conversations about our own struggles or goals we're trying to achieve, it normalizes our challenges as something that we can manage. As parents, we model this by identifying our emotions and the things that make us feel that particular emotion.

To model this, it sounds like - *"I'm really feeling frustrated today because I haven't been able to see my colleagues or go to the office."*

Next step is to give your children tools to manage that emotion - *"I'm really feeling frustrated, so I need to take a few deep breaths to help me calm down."*

- Building emotional vocabulary helps build our children's emotional intelligence. We can better identify our emotions when we have an extensive list of words to name them. Rather than simply feeling "bad", when your child can pinpoint their specific feeling, such as "irritable" or "frustrated", they have better insight to know what caused it, and what they can do about it.

Next week: ***Self-Regulation*** and tools to help manage emotions



Dive into a long-term project. Now is the time to learn a new instrument, start a 15 hour game of Risk, binge a TV series, or knit a scarf. Keep busy and engaged to help you take breaks from what is going on in the outside world.



Find something you can control in your corner of the world, no matter how small. Choose a closet or bookshelf to organize. This will help anchor and ground you when the bigger things are chaotic.

Ideas to help connect and have fun with your child...

WRITE A LETTER

Use this opportunity to connect with grandparents by teaching your kids to write a conventional letter, address an envelope properly, and stamp and mail the letter

TAKE A VIRTUAL MUSEUM TOUR

Visit The Metropolitan Museum of Art - The Met 360° Project

Site includes activities for you and your kids to explore together

TAKE AN ARTIST WALK

Take a photo of a blossoming tree or flower while on a walk through your neighbourhood and sketch it with your kids when you get home

WHAT YOU'RE FEELING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ISN'T ANXIETY, IT'S FEAR

Senator Stan Kutcher says when we are faced with a threat, the normal and healthy response is to be afraid. It's normal to have an emotional response during this COVID-19 pandemic, but what you're feeling isn't anxiety, it's fear. That's according to the former Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health.

"People are afraid, this is a threat," said Senator Stan Kutcher. "This virus is a threat to our well-being, it's a threat to our health personally, it's a threat to the health of our grandparents and people we love."

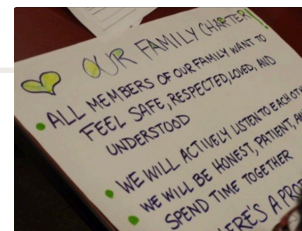
"When we are faced with a threat, the normal and healthy response is to be afraid. Anxiety is a hyperarousal in the absence of threat."

Dr. Kutcher said being able to properly label that feeling helps us become better suited to collectively overcome the situation we are facing.

~To read the complete article, google [Halifax Today](#) by Meghan Groff - March 24, 2020

Build a Family Charter adapted from Marc Brackett, Yale

The Family Charter is a written document detailing how everybody in your home wants to feel. As we all spend much time at home, building a Charter is an opportunity to improve the emotional climate in your home. Putting your emotional needs in writing makes them real for everyone. It serves as a contract - a formal agreement drafted by the whole family in a moment of calm and consideration.



1. **Ask everyone to write down 5 feelings answering: "How would you like to feel at home?"** List all the words and discuss what each means. Narrow down to the 'top 5' words and write them down on a list.
2. **For each feeling word, discuss the things that would help each member experience more of that feeling.** What are 1 or 2 behaviours that could help each member have the feeling as often as possible?
3. **Pull the pieces together and create the Charter.** Be creative - have fun. It can be small, colourful, or filled with drawings. The important thing is to have the top 5 feelings and the behaviours we do to obtain those feelings. Make sure to have everyone sign it!

Revisit to assess what is or isn't working. This is a living document so revise it as needed.