



## Social-Emotional Learning at Home Activities for High School Students

Welcome to Changing Perspectives!

We have compiled this packet of resources to help support teachers and students who are engaged in remote learning and caregivers who are supporting their students' education at home.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a critical part of every child's education and can be nurtured even when students are not in a classroom. SEL is a framework for helping students develop critical skills for how they interact with others, manage their own emotions and behaviors, and develop into confident, productive, and empathetic individuals. The activities in this packet are organized around CASEL's five core SEL standards.

This packet is designed to support secondary school students. High school students are at the juncture between being kids and being independent adults. Therefore, SEL is crucial in helping them consider who they are, who they want to be, what relationships they want to be in, and how they make decisions to position themselves for successful lives.

Please feel free to email us at [info@cpne.org](mailto:info@cpne.org) with any questions you have about this packet or the Changing Perspectives mission. We also invite you to learn more about our work on our website at [ChangingPerspectivesNow.org](http://ChangingPerspectivesNow.org).

Be kind,

Sam Drazin

Founder and Executive Director

## Self-Awareness

**Provide opportunities for students to find ways to share more about themselves.**

<p><b>About Me, By Me</b></p>	<p>Many high school students are still trying to “find themselves” and define who they are in this world. Have students create an autobiography about themselves by answering these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are five words I would use to describe myself?</li> <li>• Who are the most important people in my life and why?</li> <li>• What are some of my strengths and challenges?</li> <li>• What has been a defining moment in my life and why was it so transformative?</li> </ul> <p>There are many ways to present an autobiography. Invite students to try:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing, by hand or electronically</li> <li>• Making a video</li> <li>• Creating a podcast or audio recording</li> <li>• Giving an oral presentation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expressing Emotions</b></p>	<p>Personal, local, regional, national, and international news and events can leave any one of us feeling many emotions. To assist young adults in coping with evocative situations, it is important that they have opportunities to identify and share the emotions they are feeling in a given moment. Sometimes sharing feelings verbally can be difficult, so talk with students proactively to discuss a range of strategies they can use to help them process emotions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using an app (e.g., Instagram, TikTok) to share their emotions with a trusted adult</li> <li>• Texting emoji with a trusted adult to share their feelings</li> <li>• Writing in a private journal in a stream-of-consciousness format to process feelings</li> <li>• Learning American Sign Language (ASL) signs for emotions</li> <li>• Creating quick drawings or sketches to convey emotions</li> </ul>

## Self-Management

**Provide opportunities for students to reflect on how they manage their behaviors and emotions in challenging situations**

### Let's Get Organized

To support student success, help your teen(s) get organized and create a system for goal setting. Collaborate with your student(s) to create their systems; the more ownership they feel, the more likely they will be to use their systems successfully. Here are some strategies to try:

- Create Goal Lists: These can be done on paper, a computer, a whiteboard, an app, etc. To-do lists can be divided into two types: daily tasks and longer-term goals. For example, at the beginning of each week, when teachers have communicated all assignments, students can create a list for the week. Then, they can start each day by writing a daily task list to help them meet their broader goals. This two-fold approach helps students focus on daily work without losing track of longer-term projects.
- Pick a spot in your home for your student to set up a workspace: Give them time to assess the pros and cons of different areas, such as natural light, noise level, distractions, and comfort. Then, provide them with time to make the space their own by hanging pictures or posters or arranging furniture.

### There's More to Life Than Schoolwork

Many students feel anxious, stressed, and overwhelmed about the school work they need to complete. Encourage students to think about how to find balance in their lives by asking them to identify 1-3 goals they would like to work on beyond their obligations for school, such as:

- Exercising every day, practicing a sport, improving specific skills
- Building something
- Learning a new language
- Trying an instrument
- Learning to cook some favorite dishes
- Exploring new/different art media

## Self-Management *(continued)*

### Provide opportunities for students to reflect on how they manage their behaviors and emotions in challenging situations

#### What Works for You?

Dealing with many emotions all the time can be exhausting and make impulse control a struggle. For high school students who are generally focused on their social world, which has been disrupted repeatedly over the past few years, it is understandable that students are feeling more isolated and stressed than ever before.

Caregivers and educators can talk with teens proactively about strategies they can use to help them avoid becoming overwhelmed or to help them reset if they do. Here are some suggestions:

- Exercise: taking a walk or run, shooting hoops, working out (e.g., pushups, sit ups, pull ups, squats), yoga, using a treadmill or elliptical, dancing.
- Music: listening to a calming playlist with songs and/or artists that help them relax and deescalate, listening to an upbeat playlist that gets them dancing or singing along to blow off steam.
- Pets: brushing your dog, petting your cat, snuggling with a furry friend, talking to your pet birds, watching your fish, riding your horse, singing to your chameleon.
- Mindfulness and breathing: downloading exercises/apps (e.g., meditation, mindfulness, breathing, guided imagery) to use when feeling overwhelmed and/or at night to relax into restful sleep.
- Alone time: asking for or taking time alone to process what is going on in their lives and in the world; work with your teenager to come up with a verbal cue or physical sign they can use to indicate that they need some undisturbed time.

## Social Awareness

**Provide opportunities for students to gain social awareness of others and how they are dealing with the current changes in our lives.**

### **Empathy & Perspective Taking**

Empathy and perspective-taking are critical skills in building our social awareness, but these two concepts are quite difficult for the average teenager to develop. In these politically charged and otherwise uncertain times, it is important that we work on our skills for understanding and respecting others' perspectives.

- Empathy: Here are a few videos that can help students develop their understanding of empathy:
  - [“Empathy Can Change the World”](#) – YouTube video from middle school educator, Noah Couser (2:23)
  - [“The Power of Empathy: Audrey Moore”](#) – YouTube video from TEDxYouth@SHC (9:19)
  - [“A Wise Lesson in Empathy”](#) – YouTube from positivity YouTuber, Meir Kay (1:51)
  
- Perspective-Taking: With social media, 24/7 news, and other outlets, we are constantly inundated with differing perspectives. It can be hard to really hear through all the noise. To help your teen(s) practice active listening and perspective-taking:
  - Ask students to write a set of 4-5 interview questions and interview a variety of people they know by phone or video chat. It is important for students to interview subjects directly rather than to create a survey so they can ask follow up questions and share their own views.
  - Then, have students put together a report of their findings, highlighting differences and similarities in the responses they recorded and reflecting on if and how their own ideas changed as a result of their conversations.

## Relationship Skills

**Provide opportunities for students to gain greater relationship skills.**

### Healthy Relationship Reflection

Since the pandemic, more teenagers are having to engage more consistently with other members of their households as well as to maintain relationships through the use of technology.

- Ask students to think about the question: “How do you define a healthy relationship?”
- Then, have students answer this question in a creative way, such as by creating artwork, recording a podcast, making a video, writing a song/rap, choreographing a dance, etc.

## Responsible Decision-Making

**Provide opportunities for students to gain greater skills in responsible decision-making.**

### Good Decisions

Teens are put in situations every day where they are given the chance to make decisions. Time at home provides an opportunity for them to reflect on the ramifications (positive and negative) of past decisions and think about how they can continue developing skills for making positive decisions in the future.

Ask students to write a short response to the following prompts:

- What is a difficult decision you have had to make in your life? What made it challenging? What factors ultimately led to the choice you made?
- What is an easy decision you have had to make in your life? What made it such an obvious choice?