



School Mental Health Communities of Practice

Relationship Skills Micro-Skills

Identify and acknowledge positive examples of students giving help to others and accepting help for themselves

Micro-skills are moment-to-moment activities that K-12 building and district administrators, educators and classroom personnel, school psychologists, counselors, and social workers (among other school personnel) can use to promote mental health, behavioral health, and academic success among K-12 students. Micro-skills are designed to assist you in knowing how to respond and intervene directly with students in need (e.g., those who are experiencing MH/BH concerns). Micro-skills are strength-based and asset-driven in nature, and can be used by individuals without formal MH/BH training (e.g., micro-skills are NOT clinical strategies that must be delivered by formally trained MH/BH professionals). Identifying actionable strategies that all school personnel can take to support students spreads the onus of responsibility for addressing the MH/BH needs of students to the entire school staff, providing a broad (and needed) level of support for students.

SEL Standard: *Relationship Skills:* The ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Developing relationship skills promotes the ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist social and peer pressure, negotiate conflict, seek help, and offer help to others when they need it.

Relationship Skills Micro-Skill: Identify and acknowledge positive examples of students giving help to others and accepting help for themselves.

Relationship Skills Resources:

- Act for Youth's Relationship Skills Resources:
http://actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/sel/relationship_skills.cfm
- CASEL's Relationship Skills Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEM8FjpdSc&list=PLqSvevVI2ir-MthHDHyBhgEvWVsjgqbzO&index=3&t=0s>
- Landmark School Outreach's Relationship Skills (Social Emotional Learning):
<https://www.landmarkoutreach.org/strategies/relationship-skills-sel/>
- PBIS World's Teach Relationship Skills:
<https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/teach-relationship-skills/>
- Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework:
<https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/>



The following are micro-skills that school personnel can use to identify and acknowledge positive examples of students giving help to others and accepting help for themselves:

Teach students appropriate ways to offer help to others

- School personnel can teach students appropriate ways to give help to others by:
 - Encouraging students to offer direct help (such as sharing a writing utensil with a peer in need, helping a peer carry something, picking up and returning an object that was dropped, helping a peer locate a needed person or place)
 - Encouraging students to offer indirect help (such as being friendly, waiting their turn, allowing a peer to go first, asking a peer to join their group, holding a door open for someone, smiling genuinely at others, saying 'hello' to others)

Teach students appropriate ways to accept help from others

- School personnel can teach students appropriate ways to accept help from others by:
 - Encouraging students to acknowledge the help and to say 'thank you' when someone else does something helpful for them. For example: "Thank you so much! I really appreciate that you took a minute to help me find the room I was looking for. That really helped me out!"
 - Encouraging students to reciprocate helpful behavior (such as smiling at someone who holds the door for them, returning a greeting when someone says 'hello' to them)

Model how to give and receive help for your students

- School personnel can serve as positive role models for their students by:
 - Offering direct help to others when they are in need
 - Offering indirect help to others (such as greeting students every day, using kind and respectful words, smiling)
 - Acknowledging when someone else was being helpful and saying 'thank you'
 - Reciprocating helpful behavior that someone else does



MIAMI UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Create
opportunities
for students to
help others
during school

- School personnel can create opportunities for students to help others during school by:
 - Reminding students of the school-wide and class expectations for helpful behavior
 - Creating public displays (e.g., posters, acknowledgment boards) that highlight helping behavior
 - Incorporating the themes of helpfulness and cooperation into already-existing student activities and interactions

Give students
authentic
praise for
helping others

- School personnel can give students authentic praise for helping others by:
 - Recognizing and acknowledging when students are being helpful to others. For example:
 - "I saw that you helped your peer pick up the papers that she dropped. That was very helpful behavior. I'm very proud of you and you should be proud of yourself, too, for helping."
 - "You have a wonderful smile today! I'm sure that you are helping a lot of people feel happier today."

Teach students
how to give
compliments
to others

- School personnel can encourage students to give appropriate compliments to others by teaching them to:
 - Be positive, authentic, thankful, truthful, specific, and respectful in what they say to others
 - Identify what they like and admire about the other person and compliment them on that
 - Identify the other person's strengths and talents and compliment them on that
 - Identify something helpful the other person did and compliment them on that