



School Mental Health Communities of Practice

Responsible Decision-Making Micro-Skills

Encourage students to be responsible, honest, reliable, safe, ethical, and accountable for their decisions

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: Responsible Decision-Making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions within the context of ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. It involves making realistic evaluations of the consequences of one's actions and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

Responsible Decision-Making Micro-Skill: Encourage students to be responsible, honest, reliable, safe, ethical, and accountable for their decisions.

Responsible Decision-Making Resources:

- Act for Youth's Responsible Decision-Making Resources:
http://actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/sel/decision_making.cfm
- CASEL's Responsible Decision-Making Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWSSPnTB6OY&list=PLqSveW12ir-MthHDHyBhgEvWVsJgqbzO&index=5&t=0s>
- Landmark School Outreach's Responsible Decision-Making (Social Emotional Learning):
<https://www.landmarkoutreach.org/strategies/responsible-decision-making/>
- Resilience Inc.'s Responsible Decision-Making:
<https://mylearningtools.org/responsible-decision-making/#>



The following are micro-skills that school personnel can use to encourage students to be responsible, honest, reliable, safe, ethical, and accountable for their decisions:

Teach students how to be responsible decision- makers

- School personnel can teach students how to be responsible decision-makers by:
 - Explaining the definition of *responsibility* (e.g., *being answerable or accountable for something within your power, control, or management*)
 - Encouraging students to determine what is (and what is not) within their power, control, or management
 - Praising students who hold themselves answerable and accountable for the decisions they make that are within their power, control, and management

Teach students the importance of honesty in their decisions

- School personnel can teach students the importance of honesty in their decisions by:
 - Explaining the definition of *honesty* (e.g., *truthfulness, sincerity, or frankness*)
 - Encouraging students to be honest, truthful, sincere, and frank about the decisions they make
 - Praising students who demonstrate honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, and frankness in their decision-making

Teach students how to be reliable decision- makers

- School personnel can teach students how to be reliable decision-makers by:
 - Explaining the definition of *reliable* (e.g., *dependable*)
 - Teaching student to follow a systematic process for making decisions (and praising them when they do):
 - Stop
 - Calm down
 - Identify the problem
 - Consider the alternatives
 - Make a choice
 - Try it out
 - Re-evaluate



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Encourage students to make safe decisions

- School personnel can encourage students to make safe decisions by:
 - Explaining the definition of safe (e.g., *free from hurt, injury, danger, or risk*)
 - Encouraging students to think about issues related to their safety and the safety of others while making decisions
 - Praising students who demonstrate a commitment to the safety of themselves and others in their decision-making

Encourage students to make ethical decisions

- School personnel can encourage students to make ethical decisions by:
 - Explaining the definition of ethical (e.g., *beliefs about right and wrong pertaining to conduct and behavior*)
 - Encouraging students to treat others the way you would want to be treated
 - Encouraging students to think about whether or not the decisions they make:
 - Have a positive impact on the environment
 - Show that you are a good citizen
 - Are helpful to your community or school

Hold students accountable for the decisions they make

- School personnel can hold students accountable for the decisions they make by:
 - Explaining the definition of accountable (e.g., *to be responsible or answerable for something*)
 - Teaching students how to anticipate what the logical consequences of their decisions might be
 - Reinforcing the school/classroom rules and encouraging students to take those rules into account while making decisions