



School Mental Health Communities of Practice

Responsible Decision-Making Micro-Skills

Model responsible decision-making strategies for your students and give authentic praise to students who display those strategies appropriately

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: Model responsible decision-making strategies for your students and give authentic praise to students who display those strategies appropriately.

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=PLqSveWl2ir-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/#>



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The following are micro-skills that school personnel can use to model responsible decision-making strategies for your students and give authentic praise to students who display those strategies appropriately:

Model responsible decision- making for your students

- School personnel can model responsible decision-making strategies for your students by:
 - Stopping and calming down when you encounter a problem
 - Publicly acknowledging the problem that you are facing
 - Identifying possible solutions, along with their pros and cons
 - Choosing a solution and trying it out
 - Acknowledging what went well and what could have gone better (and committing to doing better in the future)

Teach students how to make good decisions

- School personnel can teach students the following steps in order to help them make good decisions:
 - Stop and calm down when you are facing a problem
 - Clearly identify what the problem is
 - Consider possible solutions for the problem, and weigh the pros and cons of each one
 - Decide which solution is the best one to solve the problem and try it out
 - Evaluate what went well and what could have gone better

Give students authentic praise for making good decisions

- School personnel can give students authentic praise for making good decisions by praising students for:
 - Remaining calm when faced with problems
 - Clearly identifying the problems they face
 - Identifying possible solutions
 - Listing the pros and cons of each solution
 - Trying out a solution
 - Evaluating how well their trial of a solution went



Create
opportunities
for students to
be involved in
decisions at
school

- School personnel can create opportunities for students to be involved in decisions at school by:
 - Including student representatives on committees whose activities impact the student body (and give students a voice and/or vote in those committee meetings)
 - Using democratic voting procedures with students to allow them the opportunity to vote on options/choices when decisions are needed
 - Encouraging student-led groups that have identified goals and objectives focused on student well-being

Promote
problem-
solving
thinking in
your students

- School personnel can promote problem-solving thinking in students by teaching them to:
 - Identify a problem that needs to be solved
 - Brainstorm possible solutions (and their possible outcomes)
 - Compare and contrast the possible solutions
 - Make a decision and try out an option
 - Reflect on the decision and evaluate how effective it was

Teach students
critical
thinking skills
using a SWOT
analysis

- School personnel can encourage students to be critical thinkers by using a SWOT analysis when encountering a difficult situation:
 - **S**trengths: Your own personal strengths that may help you in solving this problem
 - **W**eaknesses: Your own personal weaknesses that may get in the way of you solving this problem
 - **O**pportunities: Things in the environment (e.g., outside of you) that may help you in solving this problem
 - **T**hreats: Things in the environment (e.g., outside of you) that may get in the way of you solving this problem