



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PROJECT
CORNERSTONE**
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL + EMOTIONAL LEARNING

A Project Cornerstone Curriculum for Middle Schoolers

Overview:

Project Cornerstone's Middle School Social and Emotional (SEL) Curriculum is a student engagement program designed for middle schoolers focused on building social and emotional learning skills and competencies. Project Cornerstone prepares facilitators to lead a lesson using a slide deck, videos, activities, and discussions in classrooms for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

Structure:

Project Cornerstone's SEL program is a three-year sequence of curriculum modules for middle school. Each yearly strand of curriculum consists of seven lessons per school year. Most school partners choose to deliver lessons on a monthly basis. Lessons are aligned to the CASEL five core competencies of Social and Emotional Learning, the Developmental Assets, and the Developmental Relationships. Module content includes specially selected relevant topics for middle schoolers with a focus on wellness, skill development, and cultivating behaviors and mindsets to help middle schoolers thrive. Each module contains a slide deck with detailed facilitator notes, an embedded high-interest video clip, engaging student-centered activities, and a newsletter (in English and Spanish) for parents/caregivers to build the home-school connection. The curriculum is user-friendly and interactive.

Implementation:

School sites can determine the implementation option that best fits the needs of their students, staff, and school community. Options include:

- 1. In-Class Instruction:** Parent volunteers or school staff (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) facilitate live instruction in a classroom using the pre-prepared slide deck and materials. Facilitators could choose to supplement live instruction by playing the pre-recorded lesson provided by Project Cornerstone. Each pre-recorded module will be a 20-25 minute video of Debbi Headley, Project Cornerstone's School Partnerships and Middle School Director, teaching the lesson with instructions for when to pause the video to lead a student activity. Schools select the course/time period for implementation. For example, some schools choose to have the Project Cornerstone Middle School SEL modules taught in all their English Language Arts (ELA) courses, during an advisory, or PE classes. A 45-minute block of time is recommended for each module.

2. **Outside of Class Use:** Schools will have access to pre-recorded modules created by Project Cornerstone. Modules can be posted as an assignment for a specific class or advisory as part of students' assigned out of class work. School sites may also choose to make the modules available to parents and students in the school community to be viewed at a time that is convenient for each family. Modules could be made available through links shared in a school newsletter, online bulletin, or PTA communication.

Support for Schools and Facilitators:

Facilitators receive training via Zoom prior to each module. Training sessions include tips for teaching best practices and suggestions for creative ways to encourage participation and student voice. Trainings will be recorded and will also be available online. School sites and facilitators will receive ongoing support from Project Cornerstone throughout the year.

2023 - 2024 Module Content:

Module 1: Managing Emotions

- Defining and managing emotions
- Identifying what is within your control vs outside of your control

Module 2: Relationships

- Practicing active listening skills
- Using an assets-based perspective instead of a deficit-based lens

Module 3: Stress, Part 1

- Defining stress and healthy/optimal levels of stress
- Describing how stress affects the body
- Discussing stress busters

Module 4: Stress, Part 2

- Sharing and practicing stress management techniques
- Discussing suicide warning signs and prevention

Module 5: Me and You, Part 1

- Recognizing identity and core values
- Practicing perspective taking
- Learning how to disagree respectfully

Module 6: Me and You, Part 2

- Discussing bias, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism
- Learning how to be an UPstander
- Recognizing the power of story-telling

Module 7: Review and Survey

Questions? Want to know more? Contact:

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