



AFRICA UNITE

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In This Booklet:

About Africa Unite and SEL

2

Activities

Module 1: Self-Awareness

4

Module 2: Self-Management

6

Module 3: Social Awareness

8

Module 4: Relationship Skills

10

Module 5: Responsible Decision Making

12

ABOUT

AFRICA UNITE

Africa Unite (AU) is a human rights and youth empowerment organisation that works with citizens, refugees and migrants to prevent conflicts, enhance social cohesion and promote socio-economic development.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social Emotional Learning, or SEL, is a process of fostering beneficial social interactions and improving people's management and understanding of emotions. SEL can help people develop the mentality and skills necessary to set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, manage their emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

WHY SEL?

SEL has been found to positively impact students through effects like fostering better coping skills, reducing disciplinary referrals, and improving problem-solving skills. The top benefits of SEL include increased academic achievement, a strong return on investment, and an improved behaviour*:



77%

of all teachers say SEL can improve academic performance.



87%

of teachers believe SEL can prepare children for the real world.



87%

of all teachers believe SEL can help children become good citizens.

** Evidence based on CASEL's overall SEL research, and its meta-analysis study on the positive effects of SEL programming on student attitudes, student behaviors, and overall school performance.*

THE 5 CORE COMPONENTS OF SEL :

- **Self-Awareness**: accurately recognizing one's emotions and thoughts, and their influence on behavior (addressing one's strengths and limitations, confidence, etc.)
- **Self-Management**: regulating one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations (managing stress, motivating oneself, setting achievable goals, etc.)
- **Social-Awareness**: taking the perspective of and empathizing with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, understanding social/ethical behavioral norms, and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports
- **Relationship Skills**: establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups (conflict resolution, active listening, communication, dealing with peer pressure, etc.)
- **Responsible Decision-Making**: making positive choices about personal and social behaviors based on ethics, safety, social norms, consequences, and the well-being of those involved



MODULE 1: SELF-AWARENESS

Who Am I?

Activity #1

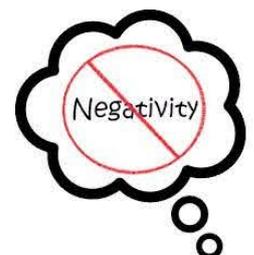


- Let students form groups of 6 with people who they trust.
 - Each person's name is written on a sheet of paper.
 - Everyone writes down at least one characteristic of the respective person.
 - Let students discuss each person's paper. (Focus on how they see themselves and what is different from the perspective of others.)
-

My Inner Critic

Activity #2

- Pass out a blank sheet of paper to every student. On the paper, have students write down their names on the top corner and a negative thought they have about themselves. Make sure that students pick a message that they are comfortable sharing with the class.
- Move around the room and have students read each others' negative messages. Have students write a positive message on each of their classmates' papers. They might feel most comfortable only writing on your friends, but encourage them to go out of their comfort zones and write something positive on everyone's paper.
- As a class, discuss the following questions:
 - How did that activity feel?
 - Does anyone want to share out the whole group?
 - Why do you think it's important to name what you think about yourself?
 - What are some ideas that we can do to tame those thoughts?



Understanding Self-Confidence

Activity #3



- Let students think of a situation in which they felt confident and experienced a sense of self-worth, and have them answer these questions:
 - What is the situation?
 - What did you say to yourself about the situation (self-talk)?
 - What sensations and feelings did you have in your body?
 - What did you do as a result of this?
- Now let them think of a recent situation in which they felt lacking in self-confidence and answer the same four questions listed above.
- Instruct students to look at their answer and use that information to answer the following questions:
 - What positive statement could I say to myself to be reminded of my power?
 - What could I do that would help me feel differently?
 - What could I do differently the next time that I am in this situation?
 - What actions would empower me?

Best Possible Self

Activity #4

- Have students close their eyes and imagine their lives at 40 years old, imagining that things have gone as well as possible. Have them think about the following questions:
 - What will you be doing (in your life/ career/ etc.)?
 - Who will be in your life?
 - What will be most important to you?
 - What will you be passionate about?
 - What matters most in the long-term?
 - How will your long-term goals and priorities affect others?
- Have students share and reflect on their thoughts with the group.



MODULE 2: SELF-MANAGEMENT

Goal Setting & Self-Motivation

Activity #1



- Write down a goal you have and take a minute to think about whether you are willing to pour hours of your time into this? Why do you want to achieve this? Why now?
- Reframe your goal into the SMART categories.
- Brainstorm & write down any ideas of how you can achieve your goal.
- Develop an action plan/ pathway to your goal with the brainstorm ideas. Be specific and to include a timeframe.
- Keep your written goals somewhere visible and keep track of where you are on your pathway.
- Give a presentation to their peers about their goal with emphasis on strategies, action plans, and ways of evaluation.

Stress Management

Activity #2



Breathing Exercises:

- **Belly Breaths:** Place your hands on your belly and take a deep breath in through your nose, blowing up your belly like a balloon. Hold the breath and then slowly exhale out of your mouth, deflating the balloon in your belly.
- **Snake Breaths:** Take a deep breath in, filling up your whole body. Pause and breathe out slowly and smoothly, making a hissing sound for as long as you can. Repeat for three to five rounds, feeling yourself slow down and become calmer each time.
- **Shoulder Roll Breaths:** Don't be afraid to add some movements in with your breathing. Roll your shoulders up towards your ears while you inhale deeply. Breathe out through your mouth and roll your shoulders down and back.

Guided meditation for relaxation: ask Africa Unite for the script

Anger Management

Activity #3



Worksheet based activity:

- Describe the problem your triggers are contributing to. What's the worst case scenario?
- Write down examples of specific stimuli in the following categories that trigger you: emotional state, people, places, things, thoughts, & situations.
- Describe your three biggest triggers in detail.
- Describe your strategy for avoiding or reducing exposure to each trigger.
- Describe your strategy for dealing with each trigger head-on, when they can not be avoided.

Reacting vs. Responding

Activity #4



- What does it mean to react or respond to an emotional stressor? Identify the difference.
- What are consequences of reacting or responding? Talk about examples of each that students experienced.
- Why is responding better?
- How to let go of the reaction and work towards preparing a response:
 - Avoid an instant reaction with breathing exercises (see activity #2).
 - Look for logic; the best response is built by logic.
 - If you can't respond and only react, set a personal boundary and remove yourself from the situation.
 - Spend some time alone; a good response can only come from a peaceful mind. Look beyond routine worries and see the larger purpose.
 - Evaluate your actions at the end of the day. Where there any situations where you overreacted? Did you react out of anger or logic? How did this affect the situation?

MODULE 3: SOCIAL AWARENESS



Choose your corner

Activity #1

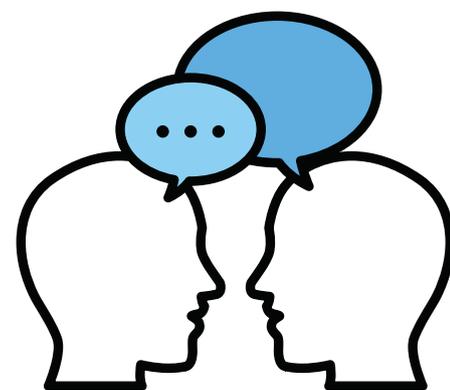
- Before class, come up with one or more controversial statements for the students to discuss.
- Place the four signs (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) around the room, one in each corner.
- Present the controversial statement to the students and give them a few moments to collect their thoughts about it and go to the corner that represents their view.
- Give each group 5-10 minutes to discuss the reasons why they chose that position. Make sure that at least one student in each group is taking notes.
- A representative from each corner shares their group's main ideas with the class.

Chat circle

Activity #2

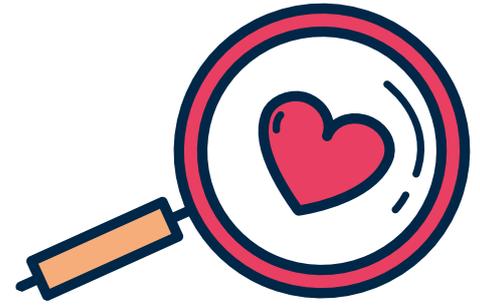


- Divide the class into smaller groups and have them form chat circles.
- When creating the small groups, try and put individuals who do not often interact in the same group.
- Present a question to each of the groups. Each person in the chat circle must answer the question.
- This activity will help students to find common points of connection, ensure that the questions allow for the expression of emotion.
- Some examples of potential questions include:
 - What is your family like?
 - What is your most happy memory?
 - What is your most frustrating memory?
 - What scares you?
 - What is something you are looking forward to?
 - What was the most challenging part of your day today?
 - Have you ever felt left out or bullied?



Empathy map

Activity #3



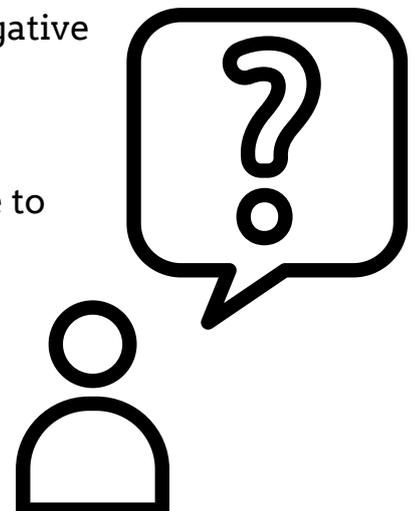
- Draw a circle in the middle of a chalkboard or whiteboard and write “our class” in the circle. Then divide the board into four sections labeled: Think, Feel, Say, Do.
- Assign an emotion to each student. Emotions such as glad, sad, happy, angry, disappointed and frustrated .
- Allow them to come up to the board and write down what they think/feel/say/do when they feel that given emotion.
- Discuss the map afterward and acknowledge how someone can say something that is the opposite of what they are feeling and discuss why.

Peer Pressure Survey

Activity #4



- Survey students on the different types of peer pressure they experience.
- Using the information gathered from the survey, create a graph which demonstrates the potential positive and negative outcomes of certain responses to each instance of peer pressure.
- Brainstorm with the class positive strategies they can use to escape or transform peer pressure.



MODULE 4: RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Dealing with conflict

Activity #1



- Let students form groups of 5 (3-4 acting and 1-2 people observing).
- Each group thinks of a conflict scenario that relates to their age group.
- Actors start to role play the scenario using productive and helpful language and action. The observers take notes.
- Then the actors role play the same situation using destructive and disrespectful language and actions (no violence!) Observers take notes.
- Compare and contrast the results in small groups and share findings.

Active Listening

Activity #2



- Let students form groups of three.
- Task: One person tells a story, one person listens and the third one just observes the interaction and makes notes.
- Students change roles so that everyone experiences each role once.
- Afterwards, give the groups 5-10 min to identify effective and ineffective listening strategies and their consequences for communication.
- As a class, discuss the following questions:
 - Did I listen actively to the person who was talking? How was it?
 - Was I distracted by something else?
 - Did I ask the other person appropriate and relevant questions?
 - Was there something about that interaction that bothered me? If there was, what was it? Why am I bothered by it?
 - What would I do differently next time?



Speed Friending

Activity #3



- Have students sit in two rows facing each other
- Have students quietly think of a quick self-description. They could include things they like to do, what's most important to them, or what makes them a good friend.
- Choose which row starts and explain: *When I say "Go," everyone in the first row will have 30 seconds to describe themselves to the person opposite them. Then it'll be the other row's turn. I'll tell you when it's time to switch. Ready? Go.*
- Start the timer. After 30 seconds give a signal and allow for the other rows turn.
- Once the round is complete have everyone stand up and move one chair to the right. Students at the end of a row will move to the beginning of the same row.
- Reflection: *Did you learn something new about someone in this class?*

Gratitude Letter

Activity #4



- Have students write a "Thank You" letter to someone that has been kind to them. It can be a small thing but the letter should be specific about what they did or said that affected their life.
- Ideally, let students deliver the letter in person. Make it a surprise. If not possible, students can try to call the person and read out the letter to them.
- Reflection: How did the experience feel like? What was the reaction?

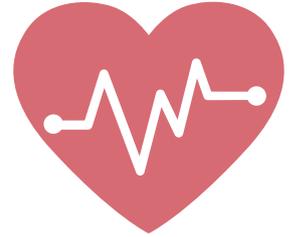
Alternative:

- Have students think of a time when they felt a strong bond with someone on the school ground. Let them write (or talk) about what happened, describing the ways in which this experience made them feel close to the other person.

Module 5: RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING

Defining Health Concepts

Activity #1



- Task: In groups of 4-5, let students find definitions for the four different categories: Disease, Fitness, Health and healthy behavior.
- After defining the above concepts, students discuss different choices that affect health in a negative and positive way and collect them on paper.
- Each group write down habits they would like to improve on and put them in a jar, Then each group must swap jars, and each learner randomly pick a habit that they must try and incorporate into their daily lives (if applicable)
- At a later stage, let students discuss the outcomes of their assigned habit (Did they managed to implement it successfully? Was it difficult? Why?)

Simon Says

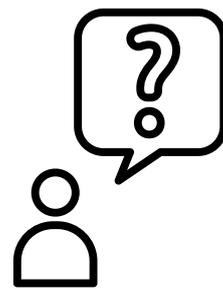
Activity #2



- Instruct students to write down many different types of responsible and irresponsible behaviours on paper, and put the suggestions into a container.
- Students stand in the center of the room with a pencil and an exercise book.
- Pick a piece of paper from the hat and read it to the class while saying the phrase Simon-Says this behaviour is responsible/ irresponsible (choose).
- Students who believe the behaviour is responsible must move to the right and those who think the behaviour is irresponsible must move to the left.
- After they have moved to their positions, instruct students to write down why they felt this way about the behaviour.
- Discussion: What influenced your decision? Was it easy or hard? What did you learn from this exercise?

Problem-Solving (Groups)

Activity #3



Discuss the following problems in groups and report findings:

1. *Liza's mother believes that it is wrong to take a life. Liza is 13 years old and pregnant. Her mother is unhappy and won't let Liza have an abortion. What could Liza do to resolve the situation? Come up with suggestions of responsible decision-making.*
- Form groups of four. Imagine that you are Liza and really want to change your mother's mind. Discuss ways in which you can justify aborting the child that would be beneficial for Liza in the long run. (Your teacher must act like a parent, and respond to each suggestion and or present a good counterargument)
2. *Jo, who is 19, has been jailed for crimes several times. He influences his brothers negatively as he lives with his parents. What should his parents?*
- (Role Play) Two members of the group are the parents, one is Jo. Come up with a dialogue to address the matter. Include the solutions and suggestions of responsibility for both parties .

Decision-Making & Problem Solving

Activity #4



Go over the following steps of decision making and problem solving:

1. Define the problem/ decision ~ 2. Consider possible alternatives/ options
 3. Write down each option's pros/ cons ~ 4. Weigh pros/ cons for each option
 5. Select the best alternative ~ 6. Implement the solution
 7. Monitor progress ~ 8. Review and learn from your experience
- Ask students to think of something they want to change or make a decision about. Then hand out individual worksheets for students to complete.

2021 PREVIEW

The Africa Unite School Club team has recently published a toolbox for Social Emotional Learning which provides educators with over fifty SEL games and activities that can be used in the classroom to promote more mindfulness, social cohesion and responsible decision making skills among students. Contact Africa Unite for a free copy.

In 2021, Africa Unite will partner up with Columba Leadership and Cool To Be Me to train more young people in Social Emotional Learning and empower them to run their own SEL related activities in their respective schools and communities.

Furthermore, Africa Unite is currently developing a Social Emotional Learning App where learners are trained as agents of change that get sent on missions to develop social and emotional competencies and help spread emotional intelligence and kindness in the world.

Exciting developments are unfolding as the world is coming closer and closer together to transform the education system and the way in which we grow into more responsible and self-aware human beings.

**For more information on Africa Unite
please visit:**

Blog: <http://africauniteblog.wordpress.com>

Website: www.africaunite.org.za

Facebook: @Umojawaafrika

Email: info@africaunite.org.za