Overview of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

What is SEL?

Social and emotional learning, or SEL, is defined by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as "the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions." [5]
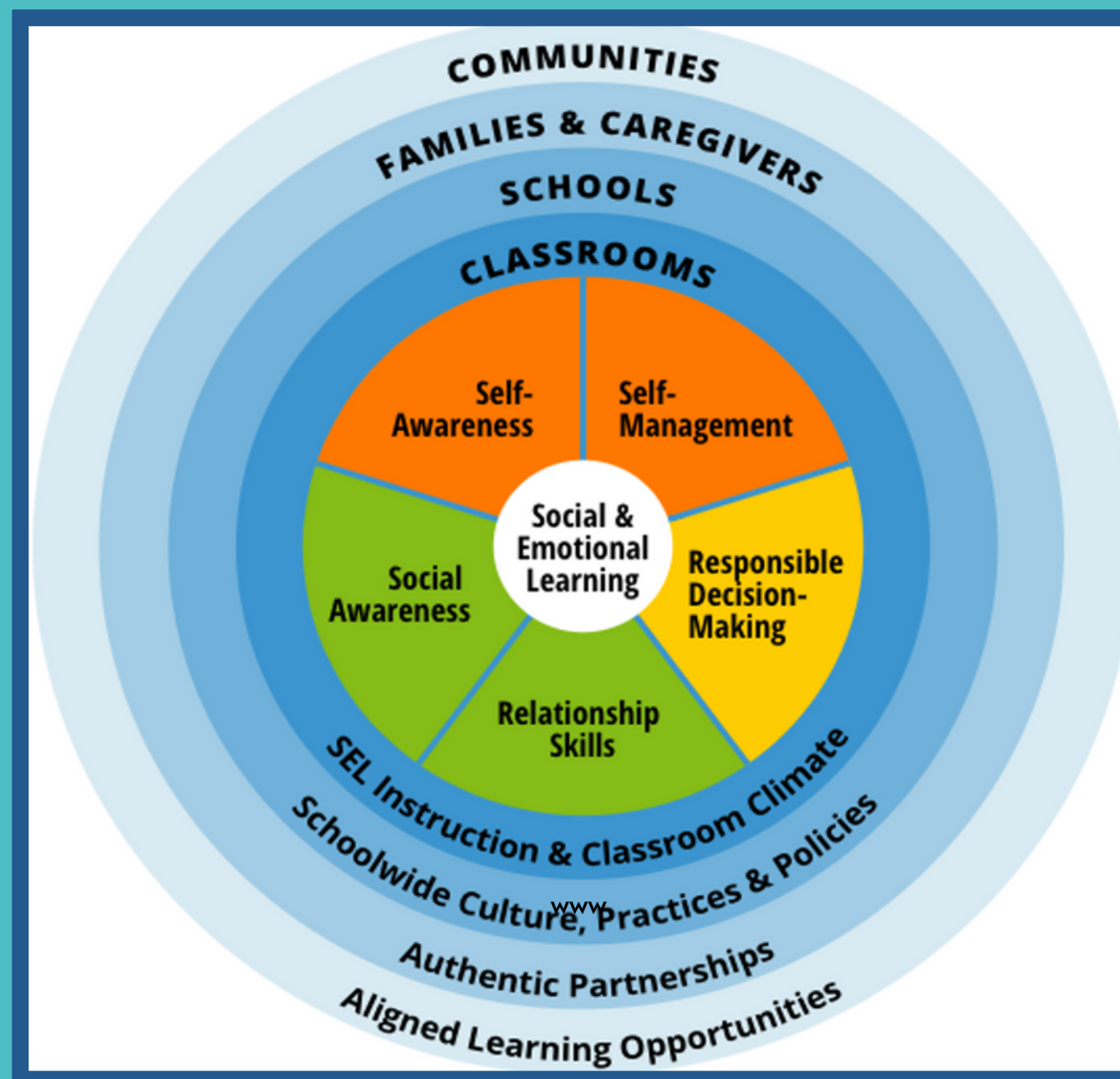

COMMUNITIES
FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS
SCHOOLS
CLASSROOMS

Self-Awareness
Self-Management
Social & Emotional Learning
Responsible Decision-Making
Social Awareness
Relationship Skills

SEL Instruction & Classroom Climate
Schoolwide Culture, Practices & Policies
Authentic Partnerships
Aligned Learning Opportunities

Image source: casel.org

SEL and Schools

A meta analysis of schools that implemented evidence-based SEL programming had the following outcomes for students:

- Improved academic performance, attitudes, and behaviors
- Decrease in the number of students who reported emotional distress [3,7]

Keep reading to see examples of how SEL can be implemented within families and classrooms.

SEL and Families

CASEL states, "Families are children's first teachers and essential to promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) throughout a child's life." [4]

The Harvard School of Education offers some suggestions on how to promote SEL as a parent:

- Emphasize the things that your child does well
- Utilize visual aids in order to help your child work on social and emotional skills
- Encouraging "I feel" statements when talking with your child (e.g. I feel sad)
- Keep a level head when communicating with your child by showing them "cool-down strategies" (e.g. taking a few deep breaths)
- Talk to your child about the value of helping out those who need it in order to teach them empathy and cooperation [13]

SEL and Equity

SEL contributes to equitable classrooms and schools by:

- Providing students with healthy human development skills
- Helping to create better relationships among schools, families, and communities
- Encouraging trust, collaboration, empathy, perspective taking, and active listening
- Promoting community-based curriculum and instruction
- Ensuring fair treatment of students by actively evaluating policies, practices, and outcomes [2]

SBMH RTI Links

SEL in the Classroom

SEL approaches should incorporate the acronym SAFE in order to be effective within the classroom:

- SEQUENCED – the activities selected work together as a whole
- ACTIVE – students are actively engaging with the material in the activities
- FOCUSED – there are times dedicated to the activities
- EXPLICIT – the activities target specific skills related to social and emotional learning [3]

Effective SEL activities are inclusive, engaging, and/or contain optimistic closure. Here are some examples teachers could implement in their classroom on a daily basis [6,12]:

- Inclusive Examples: Mood Meter [14]; Permission Slips [1]
- Engaging Examples: Discover, Discuss, Demonstrate [11]; Movement Breaks [10]
- Optimistic Closure Examples: Gratitude Journals [8]; Appreciation, Apology, Aha! [9]

References