

Rethink Ed

Supporting Students Through Legal Outcomes Related to Social Justice

Social Justice

SEL supports students' responses to social justice and legal events

As the nation engages in critical conversations regarding social justice, police conduct, and legal proceedings, students—and adults—everywhere are processing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions towards these events. More importantly, we must process our responses against the many thoughts, views, media, and reactions of those around us.



Without guidance or support, it can be a confusing, and tense, experience for all of us. Studies show that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) provides tools to discuss our thoughts and feelings around social justice by building strong, respectful relationships—founded on an appreciation of similarities and differences—all the while, learning to critically examine the root causes of inequity, and developing collaborative solutions to community and societal problems.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions; set and achieve positive goals; feel and show empathy for others; establish and maintain positive relationships; and make responsible decisions.

Rethink Ed's Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum, and the Adult Wellness Video Series, offers content to support students and educators through important social justice conversations as we come to understand important legal decisions. This content focuses on essential skills such as relationship-building, communication, empathy, emotions and self-management, and perspective-taking.

Supporting Students Through Important Legal Outcomes

Student Content and Curriculum: Critical SEL Areas to Address

- As communities grapple with the painful reality of social justice, race, and legal proceedings in America, it is important for educators, counselors, school psychologists, and parents to have conversations with the children in our care. Though children may not initiate conversations, many absorb information from the world around them, and likely have questions, concerns, or opinions.
- Six critical SEL areas in the Rethink Ed platform can help students, and adults, approach the topics of social justice and important legal events: **Emotions, Conflict Resolution, Respect, Cultural Competence, Empathy, and Support Systems**. We can find Educator content in the My Training section and student content in the Lesson Library.

Emotions:

Emotions are a natural part of what makes us human. They have the power to enrich our lives and the power to hinder our lives. As humans, we have the capacity to feel a myriad of emotions. They drive our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors and impact our self-esteem and social interactions. In the *Awareness of Self and Others Series*, students identify emotions and learn how emotions impact their behavior and affect their bodies and their relationships. Strategies for managing emotions are addressed in the *Self-Management Series*

Conflict Resolution:

Conflicts can cause the feeling of isolation, so it is important to teach students how to resolve conflicts in a way that reconnects them to others. Conflict resolution involves communication – owning one’s perspective and listening to the perspective of others. Most conflicts can be resolved through positive communication. But sometimes, people just disagree. At these times, it is important to be able to negotiate a solution that allows everyone to feel good about the resolution.

Respect:

We all have a need to belong, and respect provides us with the sense of belonging. Respect is demonstrated through communication and behavior. We show and are shown respect through the way we talk and act toward others and how they talk and act toward us. We show respect differently depending on the person and his or her position. Effective social skills include an understanding of appropriate respect of the group dynamics.

Cultural Competence:

Our world is diverse and this diversity requires students learn how to interact and engage with people different from themselves. To do this well, students must understand themselves, including their culture, their values, and their biases. Cultural competence refers to our ability to act respectfully to communicate, understand, respect, and promote equality for all people. Here, students recognize and celebrate the differences between themselves and others. They learn about the effects and dangers of stereotyping or overgeneralizing.

Empathy:

To effectively navigate the world, understand the range of human experiences, and relate with others, students must learn to empathize with others. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It is a core component of social awareness. Being empathetic promotes trust, which leads to positive relationships built on open and honest communication.

Support Systems:

Building a strong support system is an essential component to getting one’s needs met and living a happy and healthy life. A support system is a network of people who provide practical and emotional support. Having a strong support system is associated with many positive outcomes, including decreased anxiety and increased positive mood. In these lessons, students will learn about support systems as well as strategies to build and access help from the people in their support systems.

Instructional Scope and Sequence

This instructional sequence focuses on the skills needed to respond to social justice and issues related to important legal decisions. Grade level lessons for all learners (Tier 1, 2 and 3) provide educators with student videos, instructional activities, materials, assessment tools, and home and academic connections to support student learning, development, and success.

Supporting Students Through Social Justice and Important Legal Proceedings						
Social Justice and Responding to Legal Decisions	Emotions	Respect	Empathy	Conflict Resolution	Cultural Competence	Support Systems
Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking to Students About Social Injustice and How to Use Empathy as a Tool for Social Change (video) A Recipe for Resilience: SEL, Social Action, Civility and Youth Purpose (video/webinar) What's Love Got to Do with It! Creating a Cultivating a Loving Culture (video/webinar) <p>*Webinars can search for the title of these webinars in <i>My Resources</i>, under "Virtual Supports."</p>					

Instructional Tips: Talking to Students About Social Justice and Legal Outcomes

This instructional scope and sequence is designed with a specific focus on the skills needed to respond to social justice and issues related to important legal decisions. For students K-12. Grade level lessons for all learners (Tier 1, 2 and 3) provide educators with student videos, instructional activities, materials, assessment tools, and home and academic connections to support student learning, development, and success.

- Remember: students see you as a model. As you address these complex issues, take note of your own behavior, the messages you send, and the potential interpretations. Students observe your interactions with others, how you treat others, and how you speak of others.
- Students may struggle with emotions and processing, but this does not mean we should not address an important situation. Provide students with the language, vocabulary, and information they need to navigate complex issues, while taking care not to provide "too much."
- For younger students, keep it short and sweet, and provide information in a way they understand. You can use language like, "there are a lot of people who are in pain right now, and they are trying to communicate that pain," or, "there are a lot of people waiting on a really important decision right now. This decision is important to a lot of people who feel sad or angry."
- For older students, such as middle school and high school students, recognize a bulk of their information comes from peers and social media. Allow them to lead the conversation and listen to what they communicate. However, supplement what they are hearing, and be prepared to correct any misinformation they may have heard through social media.
- Prepare yourself. Understand these are complex issues and do your research. Gather the information you need, and self-reflect on your own emotions, thoughts, feelings, and biases. Most importantly, recognize that you do not have all the answers; it is ok to not have all the answers, and it is ok to tell your students so. It is ok not to be sure, and it is ok to recognize your feelings, too. You do not need to have all the answers, but we should not avoid the conversation.

Additional Resources for Adult Learners and Educators

This video sequence focuses on the skills adults and educators may need to respond to social justice and issues related to important legal decisions. The Educator videos in the My Training section follow the same SEL scope and sequence through more mature content. In addition to the six core SEL areas, adult learners can also view video modules that address four critical SEL and Equity areas, and two Trauma areas: **Culturally Responsive Teaching, Empowering Students to Address Injustice, The Impact of Implicit Bias on Education Equity, Leveraging SEL to Promote Educational Equity, Adults Coping with Trauma, and Helping Students Cope with Trauma.**

Culturally Responsive Teaching:

This module will talk about how SEL is most effective when taught in a culturally responsive way and provide strategies on how to make any SEL lesson culturally relevant for your classroom.

Empowering Students to Address Injustice:

This module discusses teaching students to recognize injustices in current and historical contexts and using SEL skills to effectively address inequities in their schools and communities.

Respect:

This module identifies factors that impede educational equity such as implicit biases and inequitable practices and discusses how implementing SEL for both educators and students can promote inclusiveness and equity.

Cultural Competence:

This module explores how the implicit biases of educators and students can affect equity and provides strategies for increasing awareness and decreasing these biases.

Adults Coping with Trauma:

Overview of the common physical & emotional reactions to traumatic events, as well as strategies for coping with traumatic stress.

Helping Students Cope with Trauma:

Overview of the common physical & emotional reactions children and teens may have to traumatic events, as well as strategies for educators to help their students cope with traumatic stress.

Supporting Students Through Social Justice and Important Legal Proceedings						
SEL Areas for Social Justice and Responding Legal Outcomes	Emotions	Respect	Empathy	Conflict Resolution	Cultural Competence	Support Systems
SEL Equity and Trauma	Culturally Responsive Teaching	Empowering Students to Address Injustice	The Impact of Implicit Bias on Education Equity	Leveraging SEL to Promote Educational Equity	Adults Coping with Trauma	Helping Students Cope with Trauma
Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking to Students About Social Injustice and How to Use Empathy as a Tool for Social Change (video) A Recipe for Resilience: SEL, Social Action, Civility and Youth Purpose (video/webinar) What's Love Got to Do with It! Creating a Cultivating a Loving Culture (video/webinar) *Webinars can search for the title of these webinars in <i>My Resources</i>, under "Virtual Supports." 					