

Adult SEL: Now More Than Ever
Notes from Breakout Rooms
ELN Event, October 29, 2020

Shared Strategies for Leaders and Staff Members to Support Adult Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Recognition and Morale Boosting

- Shout outs and celebrations for staff.
- Send a Sunday night text to encourage people, trying to bring the energy to staff.
- Share positive feedback from a parents with teachers
- Share gratitude towards one another. Begin meetings with one appreciation that you have for someone else.
- Use chat function to express gratitude
- Send thank you cards to staff.
- Show positive affirmations to prevent being overwhelmed by the negative. Deliver even difficult information in a positive way rather than “doom and gloom”.
- Remind teachers of the good work they are doing. Let go of "perfection" expectation.
- Remind staff there is no need to apologize for life interruptions such as children coming into the camera view.
- The gift of time helps to build morale. Re-think all the meetings we require and how we ask staff to participate. Limit the pre-reading...invite them to be free from other tasks.
- Deliver tokens of appreciation to staff homes.
- Set up hospitality station in office, treat bags for staff.
- Donor outfitted teacher lounge with new furniture, fridge that was stocked with food and snacks.

Creating Fun

- Start a meeting with Name that Tune game.
- Gamification of meeting activities
- Share appropriate memes, jokes, things that make you laugh during meetings and emails.
- Play games together online
- Friday online socials.
- Drive through celebrations (staff birthdays, appreciation days, etc.)
- In person setting: jokes, songs during announcements to keep things light;
- In person setting: create fun breaks like Frisbee golf, badminton for staff

Communication

- Share great things happening at the school in a clear, concise, consistent and coherent manner
- Build on rapport & strong communication. Don't over or under react.
- Be transparent. Share what we know, when we know it.
- Clear, consistent, and reasonably informal communication. Avoid using “us and them” language.
- Ask check-in questions such as “How are you doing?”, “How did it go today?”, “How is your family?”, and “How is your dog?”
- Use a “0-5 check in”. This opens up the conversation of how people are really doing.
- Provide optional opportunities for lunch groups or discussion groups.

Connecting

- Recognize that people are breaking, but they are not broken. Provide time to meet, connect, and breathe. Give people space to just talk and feel.
- Start meetings off with connecting and sharing time.
- Creation of a circle practice with staff. Takes away the power structure. Creates space to process without a set agenda.
- Welcome back interview - Staff took time to connect with students and families prior to the start of school. Share excitement about start of school year.
- Build relationships through informal conversations
- Sitting with people in their tough times. You don't have to fix it. Be a listening ear and empathize.
- School counselors work with own staff.
- Partner with another school to fight isolation

Collaboration

- Teams are collaborating more often. Collaboration has been very strong and helpful for staff.
- One silver lining is partnering with one another. Sharing the load and helping one another.
- Opportunities to collaborate on Zoom. These would not have happened under normal circumstances. Zoom eliminated the need to travel and made time more flexible.

Self-Care

- Every meeting starts with mindfulness moment.
- Trainings for staff on how they can be mindful and how to recognize emotions
- Embed equity work into SEL, self-awareness, self-advocacy.
- Help teachers find ways to prioritize self-care.
- Be mindful of your message of self-care. Does the system actually support self-care? Being aware that wellness/mindfulness can take many forms.
- If you try a self-care strategy and it doesn't work don't give up - try something else.
- Trust people to know themselves. Sometimes they have no more to give.
- Be wary of empathy fatigue.
- Stop meetings 5 minutes early to encourage participants to go walk around, get a drink, go outside.
- We were getting in the weeds every meeting, so we took mindfulness moments to put everything aside and focus on self-care.
- Encourage all to meet their basic human needs by taking the time to take care of themselves.