SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DISTANT LEARNING SESSION 2: SELF-AWARENESS

WHAT IS SELF-AWARENESS:
The first skill associated with social emotional learning (SEL) is self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values, and how they influence behavior. The following links to YouTube videos will tell you more about self-awareness and self-acceptance:
- What is Self-Awareness? (K-4)
- The Reflection In Me. (K-2)
- I Like Myself (K-3).
We will also introduce the concept of mindfulness in this session. Mindfulness teaches students how to recognize and accept their present thoughts and emotions. It can also help them cope with discomforting situations in life and become self-aware of their feelings.

Learning to be aware of one’s self allows students to see how others see them, and it’s an important skill that can help students effectively express themselves.

The following activities will help students learn to become aware of their emotions and how they affect behavior: Mindful Activities For Kids (K-2)

Breathing Exercises - Helps one to be mindful of your breath by simply observing: breathing in and breathing out, without controlling or judging it in any way. Here are a few kid friendly breathing exercises:
- Flower Breath - Imagine smelling a beautiful flower, breathe in through the nose and out the mouth, releasing any tension. Stop and smell the roses, daffodils, daisies or any other flower they like. This is a simple way to connect kids to their breath and how it helps them feel.
- Hissing Breath - Breath in through the nose - long deep inhale - and out through the mouth with a hissing sound, slow and long. Extending the exhale will allow kids to slow down their inner speed. It’s wonderful to connect kids to their exhale to help them learn to slow themselves down, mentally and physically.
- Bear Breath - Inhale through the nose, pause; exhale out the nose, pause. Breathe in for a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2; breath out for a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2. Repeat a few times. This will help ground and settle kids. Wonderful for restful, reflective time. Imagine a bear hibernating.
- Bunny Breath - Just 3 quick sniffs in the nose and one long exhale out the nose. Invite kids to pretend to be bunnies, sniffing the air for other bunnies, carrots to eat, or shelter. It can be a lovely cleansing breath when you use it in this way. You can also use it when kids are very upset and can’t find their breath, because it will help them connect to their exhale so that they breathe.
Mindful Posing - Students can pretend to be a superhero (Superman or Superwoman) posing in the mirror. Ask your child how he or she feels after a few rounds of trying either of the poses. You may be surprised by their responses. Download Superhero Posters on our KO@Home SEL Lessons webpage to help your student feel good about being a young musician.

- Turn on Your Spidey Senses - Instruct your student(s) to turn on their Spidey Senses, or their super-focused senses of smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch that Spiderman uses to keep tabs on the world around him. This will cause them to pause and focus their attention on the present moment, opening their awareness to the information their senses take in. It encourages observation and curiosity.

- Spidey Senses with a Musical Twist - Instruct your student(s) to turn on their Musical Spidey Senses. Now they will pretend to be their Kids’ Orchestra Teaching Artist. They will play their instruments using super-focused senses of hands, mouth, breath, mind, and hearing. Ask your student(s) if they feel as though they played better than before. Did it help to focus on their super-focused Musical Spidey Senses? Spidey Senses can be used for instrument care and putting together and taking apart instruments.

Mindful Jar - This exercise teaches children how to practice mindfulness while focusing on the swirling glitter in the jar. This activity shows children how strong emotions can take hold, and how to find peace when these strong emotions become overwhelming. Please use the scripted dialogue below and this Mindful Jar link to complete this thoughtful and fun activity.

- First get a clear jar, like a mason jar, and fill it almost all the way to the top. Add a big spoonful of glitter glue or dry glitter and glue. Put the lid back on the jar tightly and shake it to make the glitter swirl. Finally, use the following script to explain the lesson.
- Imagine that the glitter is like your thoughts when you get stressed, mad, or upset. See how they whirl around and make it hard to see clearly. Don’t worry: getting upset or stressed is normal, it happens to all of us. [Now, put the jar down in front of your child.]
- Now, look what happens when you’re still for a few moments. Keep watching. See how the glitter starts to settle and how the water clears. Your mind works the same way. When you’re calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and things get clearer. Taking deep breaths during this calming period can help us settle when we feel lots of emotions.