

This Week's Topic: Self-Regulation

Developing self-management is an important social emotional skill. Self-management is the ability to identify and use successful strategies when you're in an escalated state. Self-awareness is the ability to self-reflect, acknowledge, and name your emotions—and the thoughts, behavior, and physicality of them. This is a critical first step in building self-management skills. Providing opportunities to build self-management in the ELO program helps cultivate a safe and accepting environment where participants share about themselves and are met with acceptance, respect, and empathy. Staff's role is to support participants through active listening, affirmations, and open-ended questions that guide participants towards helpful strategies for self-regulation.¹

Practice Tips

Here are a few quick tips for teaching self-regulation.

[Smiley Face](#) (K-4) [Mood Meter](#) (5-12)

Invite young people to identify a smiley face, ask why they selected it, and what caused those feelings. If escalated, or not in the green, ask what strategies they could use to help them regulate and move to the green quadrant. The Smiley Chart is recommended for K-4 or for those who might need practice building emotion language. The Mood Meter has more nuanced language and is suitable for 5-12, or for students who have established emotion vocabulary.

[Suggest Using a Resource to Help with Communication](#)

Example: Can we use the smiley face chart to figure out what's going on and how I can best support you?

[Ask Them to Point to the Face that Represents How They Feel and Ask Them to Confirm](#)

Example: You pointed to the sad face. Is that right, you feel sad?

[Acknowledge and Validate Their Feelings](#)

Example: I'm sorry to hear you feel sad. It's ok to feel sad, we all feel sad sometimes.

[Ask Them What Caused Their Feelings](#)

Example: What made you feel sad?

[Encourage Further Self-Awareness by Exploring What the Emotion is Communicating](#)

Example: What do you think your sadness is trying to tell you?

[Explore Ways That They've Been Successful in Coping in the Past.](#)

Example: What has helped you manage your sadness before?

[Offer Your Support and Let Them Determine What Supports They Want/Need.](#)

Example: Is there anything I can do to help you feel less sad now?

[Offer the Program's Support](#)

Example: Could we do something here in the program that would help you feel less sad?

[Allow Them Space and Time to Process in Their Own Way](#)

Example: When you're ready, I'm here to help you explore your sadness.

Tips in Action!

[Watch](#) a participant at Launch at Maple Elementary lead a self-regulation activity.

Want more two minute tips?

Check out our [website](#). There you will find the latest tip, and an archive of past tips.

¹ Hillaker, B., Akiva, T., Jones, M., Sutter, A., Wallace, L., McGovern, G., Harris, J., Peck, S., & Smith, C. (2017). *Program quality assessment handbook: Social emotional learning version*. Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment.