

Introduction to Teaching Self-Awareness 2025

Self-Awareness Module

The Importance of Self-Awareness

We need to be self-aware to be emotionally, socially, and physically healthy. Not only is being self-aware an end in itself, but it is also a prerequisite for developing competency in the other SES skills. We need to know what we are feeling and thinking and why, what we value, and understand our needs, talents, and interests to:

- effectively manage our emotions and cope with difficult situations (self-management),
- make effective decisions, solve personal problems, and set goals (responsible decision-making),
- take the perspective of and empathize with others (social awareness).
- communicate effectively and resolve misunderstandings and conflicts in relationships (relationship skills).

Self-Awareness is Essential to:

1. Accurately assess our strengths and limitations and accurately perceive who we are and how we wish to become.
2. Have self-confidence, positive self-esteem, and a growth mindset.
3. Know when we are being our true selves and being genuine and when we are not.
4. Know when our coping methods are effective and when they are not.
5. Understand how to successfully regulate and manage our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.
6. Understand the effects our actions and inaction have on us and others.
7. Set and work towards personal and academic goals and make responsible decisions.
8. Identify personal problems, analyze risks and consequences, make responsible decisions to solve them, and understand the barriers to action and what might be holding us back from change.
9. Develop goals and set priorities based on our values, strengths, interests, needs, and talents, as well as the needs of others.
10. Understand the impact our eating, exercise, sleep habits, and other behaviors have on our health.
11. Identify stressors in life, take action to prevent them when possible, and cope effectively with them when prevention is not possible.
12. Take the perspective of and empathize with others.
13. Establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships and make healthy choices in relationships.
14. Resist social pressure when it goes against our values, needs, and goals.
15. Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, and work effectively in groups and teams.
16. Work through conflicts, misunderstandings, and impasses in relationships.

Students need to be self-aware before you, the teacher, can successfully facilitate the development of the other SES skills. One cannot master the other SES skills (self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness) without being self-aware. If you have not already done so, see the [Self-Awareness Reading](#) and the [Self-Disclosure Reading](#) in this module for additional essential background information on self-awareness and the importance of self-disclosure in developing self-awareness and healthy relationships.

People Who Are Self-Aware:

1. Experience a broad range of emotions
2. Understand and accept what they feel and why they feel that way.
3. Understand that initial feelings such as anger may be a secondary feeling that masks deeper feelings.
4. Understand how their feelings affect their behavior and their relationships.
5. Understand when their feelings are caused by their behavior or events, situations, and relationships in the present.
6. Understand when their feelings are caused by things that have happened in the past or things they anticipate may occur in the future.
7. Know their interests, talents, needs, values, and goals and what gives them meaning, purpose, and satisfaction.
8. Know when they are being themselves (genuine) and when they are not.
9. Understand and accept what they are thinking (their assumptions, interpretations, attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices) and why they think that way.
10. Understand when their feelings are caused by their thinking.
11. Are able to determine whether their thinking (their assumptions, interpretations, attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices) is accurate, realistic, and/or rational.
12. Know how their thinking affects how they feel.
13. Know how their thinking affects their behavior and their relationships.

People who are self-aware know what they are really seeing, feeling, thinking, saying, sensing, doing, daydreaming, and fantasizing about. Being self-aware tells us who and how we are in the present and how we wish to become in the future. It can be a call to action to continue as we are or change.

Self-Awareness As a Prerequisite To The Other SES Skills

As stated earlier, not only is self-awareness an end in itself, but it is also a prerequisite skill to develop mastery of the other social-emotional skills. All of these skills are interrelated. It is impossible to manage one's feelings and thinking, make decisions and solve personal problems (based on one's needs, values, interests, and talents), and communicate effectively with others to successfully work through misunderstandings and conflicts without being self-aware.

In this [Self-Awareness Module](#), the learning experiences focus on facilitating students' awareness of their feelings and thinking, and why they feel and think this way.

In the [Self-Management Skills Module](#), the learning experiences focus on having students identify their methods of coping with their feelings, their styles of expressing feelings, and how to cope more effectively with anger and other unpleasant feelings. In addition, there are learning experiences that focus on self-awareness skills, such as identifying what one is thinking (and why) and how unrealistic thinking, assumptions, interpretations, and prejudices affect how we feel and, thus, how we behave (the skill of reality-checking).

In the [Decision Making & Personal Problem Solving Module](#), the learning experiences focus on helping students make decisions and solve personal problems based on their needs, values, interests, and talents.

In the [Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#), the learning experiences focus on the skills needed to effectively communicate one's feelings and needs with others, work through misunderstandings successfully, and resist peer and social pressure.

In the [Conflict Resolution Skills Module](#), the learning experiences focus on the skills needed to resolve interpersonal conflicts.

Based on what students learn about themselves, their feelings and thinking, their needs, and ways of coping after completing learning experiences, they may develop goals to change their behavior. See the [Social-Emotional Skills Projects Module](#) for multiple projects that have students apply the skills of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and interpersonal conflict resolution skills in real-life situations.

Integrating Self-Awareness Skills Into Minute-to-Minute Classroom Life

An important variable in helping students become self-aware is integrating these skills into the minute-to-minute process of classroom life whenever possible. Teachable moments frequently occur in all classrooms and can be used to promote self-awareness. Stories, plays, local and national events, and classroom situations can be used as a basis to discuss the feelings, attitudes, values, beliefs, goals, and behaviors of the characters involved, why they felt and acted the way they did, and the impact their behavior had on them and their relationships. Teachers might then steer the discussion towards how students would feel if they were or have been in similar situations and what they would do or have done in similar situations. In addition, teachers and/or students may select a pleasant and/or unpleasant feeling of the week to discuss.

Emotionally Connecting With Students

At the beginning of the year, after a long weekend or a school vacation, or at any time you want to reconnect with your students, ask them to share a pleasant feeling they experienced during break and why they felt that way. After everyone has the opportunity to share, ask them to share an unpleasant feeling they experienced, why they felt that way, how they acted on their feelings, the consequences of their actions for them and others, and what, if anything, they would do differently.

Teaching Self-Awareness

Social-emotional skills can be learned if they are modeled and systematically taught by teachers. If the skills are taught, and if students are given multiple opportunities to practice the skills in the classroom, process their use of the skill, receive feedback, and use them in their lives outside the classroom, they will be able to master them, and these skills can become an integral part of their lives. Outlined below are the steps in teaching a skill. See [How To Teach SES Skills](#) in the [How To Teach Social-Emotional Skills Module](#) for a more comprehensive discussion.

Helping Students See the Need for the Skill

Providing students with a rationale for learning a new skill and relating it to their past, present, or future experiences can help them see a need to learn it.

Ensuring Students Understand What the Skill Is

Skills need to be specific, observable, and describable.

Setting Up Repetitive Practice Sessions

Students need a chance to 'try on' the new skill and see how it fits. We can't just ask our students to talk about a new skill. Like a coach and music teacher, we need to give them a chance to practice it. This means having students practice the skill again and again. Most skill development learning experiences provide students with the opportunity to role-play the skills in class.

Ensuring That Students Process Their Use of the Skills and Receive Feedback Whenever Possible

Practicing is not enough. Students must be given time to reflect on and process their use of the skills to determine what they did well and what they need to do better the next time they use it. Whenever possible, students should be given feedback on the quality of their use of the skill. Many skill development learning experiences utilize self-evaluation and student observers/coaches.

Apply the Skills in Real-Life Situations

It is not enough to have students role-play the skills only in class. At some point, students need to start using the skills in real-life situations. They must be given opportunities to apply skills in real-life outside of class. Using skills in real-life situations, processing the results, and modifying their response is necessary and must be continuous and ongoing.

After completing many learning experiences, students can set a goal to apply a skill and change their behavior outside of school. Behavior change projects and assessments can be very simple or very complex. The simplest behavior change project involves using the [My Goals Log](#), ([SES Projects Module](#) where students develop a goal and evaluate their success at the midpoint and again at the end of the project. More complex projects involve students developing and implementing a plan to change their behavior, monitoring their progress over time using self-monitoring charts, and assessing their effort, progress, and the extent to which they completed the project. See the [Social-Emotional Skills Projects Module](#) for the self-awareness projects. For a full explanation of teaching skills, see [How To Teach SES Skills](#) in the [How To Teach Social-Emotional Skills Module](#).

Mastering social-emotional skills is extremely complex. These skills cannot be mastered in a few classes. Below are the learning experiences found in this module. The more time given to teaching these skills, the greater the chance students will master them. Most of you only have time to use some of these learning experiences. You will need to choose those that best meet the needs of your students and modify them accordingly.

Self-Awareness Learning Experiences, Readings, & Projects

[Self-Awareness Module](#)

Self-Awareness Readings & Learning Experiences

Self-Awareness Reading ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

This reading provides background information for teachers and students on the importance of self-awareness.

Self-Disclosure Reading ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

This reading provides background information for teachers and students on the importance of being willing and able to self-disclose.

Awareness of Feelings & Thinking Skill Card ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

This skill card provides students with a two-page summary of questions to ask when trying to determine what one is feeling and thinking (interpretations and assumptions). It outlines basic and more advanced questions to help one determine what is bothering them and questions to help manage one's feelings and thinking.

Zones of Awareness Guided Imagery Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to the skill of becoming aware of the three zones of awareness and to learn how to focus their awareness.

Feelings Charade Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

This learning experience is a fun way to introduce students to the idea that we experience a broad range of emotions, to demonstrate that we express our feelings in different ways, and that it can be challenging to determine what someone else is feeling by how they look and act.

Common Feelings Experienced by People My Age Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

The purpose of this learning experience is to get students more comfortable talking about feelings and why people feel the way they do and to help them understand that they are not alone in the way they feel and why they feel that way.

Self-Disclosure Circle Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

This powerful multi-purpose learning experience develops the essential skills of self-awareness and self-disclosure and hopefully allows them to feel more trusting self-disclosing in class. It also helps students become aware of how they have similar feelings and experiences around the same or similar issues as their peers and that they may express and manage their emotions in similar ways. Students may also explore healthier ways of managing feelings and self-disclosing with others. Students may also be introduced to personal problem-solving and goal setting using My Goals Log ([Self-Awareness Module](#)) as a follow-up activity.

Feelings Statements Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

The purpose of this learning experience is for students to understand that they experience a wide range of emotions and to help them understand why they feel the way they do. It can also be used to help them begin to understand the impact their feelings have on their behavior and relationships.

Feelings Change Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

The purpose of this learning experience is to help students understand that even though, in most cases, we need to change our behavior, our situation, our environment, our thinking, or our relationship to change and manage our feelings, there are times when our feelings change because of what happens to us or the situations we are in.

Conflicting Feelings Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

This learning experience aims to help students understand that we can have conflicting feelings/mixed emotions about the same experience, event, situation, environment, or relationship. It can also be used as an introduction to how our thinking affects our feelings.

Self-Awareness of Feelings Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

The purpose of this learning experience is to facilitate students' awareness of the variety of feelings they experience and why they feel this way. Students use the **Feelings Log** ([Self-Awareness Module](#)) to track their feelings and why they feel this way over time.

- **Feelings Log** ([Self-Awareness Module](#)): Students use this log to keep track of their feelings and why they feel this way over time.

Advanced Self-Awareness Learning Experiences & Projects

Focusing: Determining the Depth of My Feelings Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#))

Focusing is a more advanced skill that helps us discover the full depth of our feelings and why we feel that way. It is best used when we aren't entirely sure what we are feeling, when we have a vague sense that something is not right, when we don't feel good, or when we use general terms like feeling depressed or bad, feelings that don't fully describe the extent of our emotions and why we feel that way. It can also be used when we are angry to understand the feelings that trigger our anger, and when initial feelings may mask deeper feelings.

- **Focusing Long Form** ([Self-Awareness Module](#)): This form is used by students to record their responses during the Focusing process.
- **Focusing Short Form** ([Self-Awareness Module](#)): This form is a shorter version of the Focusing Long form and may be used in its place.

Applying Self-Awareness & Goal-Setting Skills In Real Life Situations: The Projects

My Goals Learning Experience ([SES Projects Module](#))

Students can keep a My Goals Log to develop and track goals following most learning experiences. It does not require as much time or assessments as the SES Skills BC Projects.

- **My Goals Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)): Students use this log to write their goals, assess how they are doing at a midpoint and what, if anything, they need to do to be more successful, and then evaluate their success at the end of the project. The log tracks all goals they develop throughout the year.

Self-Disclosure Project ([SES Projects Module](#))

The purpose of this project is to give students multiple opportunities to self-disclose in real-life situations. This project is best used as a follow-up learning experience after students have completed the Self-Disclosure Circles Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)):

Focusing Project ([SES Projects Module](#))

The purpose of this project is to facilitate the development of the skill of Focusing. It is a follow-up learning experience to the Focusing Learning Experience.

- **Focusing Long Form** ([SES Projects Module](#)): This form is used by students to record their responses during the Focusing process.
- **Focusing Short Form** ([SES Projects Module](#)): This form is a shorter version of the Focusing Long Form and may be used in its place.

Managing My Feelings, Thinking, Behavior, and Coping With Life Situations:

[Self-Management Skills Module](#)

Self-awareness is a prerequisite skill to be able to manage our feelings, thoughts, and behavior, and for coping with life situations. See the [Self-Management Skills Module](#) for the student learning experiences, readings, skill cards, and projects outlined below:

1. Introduction To Teaching Self-Management
2. Managing Feelings & Thinking Reading
3. Awareness of Feelings & Thinking Skill Card
4. Self-Awareness & Managing Feelings LE
5. Feelings & Managing My Feelings Log
6. Managing Feelings by Changing My Behavior LE
7. Building More Pleasant Feelings Log
8. Reducing Unpleasant Feelings Log
9. My Styles of Expressing Feelings LE

Managing Anger ([Self-Management Skills Module](#))

10. Managing Anger Poorly Cases LE
11. Managing Anger Poorly Cases Chart
12. Managing My Anger LE
13. Managing My Anger Log

How Do I Cope ([Self-Management Skills Module](#))

14. 10. How Do I Cope LE

Managing Feelings by Changing Unhealthy Thinking ([Self-Management Skills Module](#))

15. Managing Unrealistic Thinking LE
16. My Unrealistic Thinking Log
18. Reality Checking: Changing Unhealthy Thinking LE
19. Reality Checking Skill Card
20. Jealousy LE: Combining the Focusing & Reality Checking Processes

Self-Management Projects ([SES Projects Module](#))

21. My Goals LE
22. My Goals Log
23. Managing My Feelings by Changing My Behavior Project
 My Styles of Expressing Feelings Project
24. My Styles of Expressing Feelings Log
25. Managing My Anger Project
26. Managing My Anger Project Log
27. Coping in Healthier Ways Project
28. Healthy Ways of Coping/Managing Feelings Log
29. Unhealthy Ways of Coping/Managing Feelings Log
30. Managing My Unhealthy Assumptions Project
31. My Unhealthy Assumptions Log
32. Managing My Unrealistic Thinking Project
33. My Unrealistic Thinking Log