Social-Emotional Learning Improves College Access

Generation Z youth have multiple stressors affecting their mental health. According to the Association for Children's Mental Health, 1 in 5 youth have a diagnosable emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorder. 1 in 10 adolescents have a serious mental health issue impairing their function at home or in school.[1]

Schools are seeking ways to help students, but can't fulfill every student's needs. Estimates show that at least 80 percent of youth ages 6-17 do not receive proper mental health care. Without proper mental health care, the issue can become worse, causing serious mental health issues impairing their learning.[2]

Nationally, the graduation rate of students with emotional, behavioral and mental disorders is at 40 percent, compared to the national average of 76 percent. Students who are 14 or older and have an emotional or behavioral disability have a dropout rate of 50 percent, making them the highest dropout rate of any disability.

Mental Health Disorders affect classroom learning and social interaction, which are crucial for student success. However, with proper intervention and support, a youth's mental health can be optimized for success and reduce negative effects.

Students are not born knowing how to manage emotions, solve problems, and get along with others. Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps youth acquire tools to use in social interactions and to manage their emotional response. Things such as setting goals, social awareness, and taking responsibility for oneself are imperative to maintaining healthy relationships and self-care.

SEL also positively influences college going. Those who can cope with stress have been found to transition to college more successfully and perform better academically.[3] And, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, social-emotional learning helps young people be "twice as likely to attain a college degree in early adulthood; 54 percent more likely to earn a high school diploma; and 46 percent more likely to have a full-time job at the age of 25."[4]

SEL provides tools for students to handle life events with confidence, persistence, and success. In a 2018 study, 13 percent of graduates from schools that limited SEL felt their school prepared them to be successful after high school, and 8 percent felt they were prepared for a job or career.[5] Meanwhile, 48 percent of students in a school that implemented SEL felt they were prepared to be successful after high school, and 41 percent were prepared for a job or career.

SEL has five key areas:[6]

1. **Self-awareness**: The ability to identify emotions, recognize strengths and needs, and develop a growth mindset.
2. **Self-management**: The ability to manage emotions, control impulses, and set goals.
3. **Social awareness**: The ability to see things from another person's perspective, show empathy, and appreciate diversity.
4. **Relationship skills**: The ability to communicate, cooperate, and resolve conflict.
5. **Responsible decision-making**: The ability to identify consequences of personal behavior.

[1] "Problems at School: Association for Children's Mental Health." ACMH, March 10, 2019.
http://www.acmh-mi.org/get-help/navigating/problems-at-school/.

[2] Kataoka, Sheryl H., Lily Zhang, and Kenneth B. Wells. "Unmet need for mental health care among US children: Variation by ethnicity and insurance status." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 159, no. 9 (2002): 1548-1555.

[3] Dymnicki Allison, Megan Sambolt, and Yael Kindron. "College & Career Readiness & Success Center At American Institute for
Research." Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research, 2013

[4] "Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness," published on October 09,2015, in American Journal of Public Health

[5] DePaoli, Jennifer L., Matthew N. Atwell, John M. Bridgeland, Bridgeland P. Shriver, and Timothy P. Shriver. "Respected Perspectives of Youth on High School & Social and Emotional Learning." 2018: By Civic with Hart Research Associates, November 2018.

[6] "What is SEL?" CASEL. CASEL Educating Hearts and Inspiring Minds,2019.https://casel.org/what-is-sel/.