

## **Social and Emotional Learning in the Time of Distance Learning: An Online Resource for Educators Concerned about Children's Coping Skills**

**Dr. Barbara Fatum**

**My name is Dr. Barbara Fatum and I am a school psychologist who specializes in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and who has been practicing for over 30 years. I am very concerned about children's well-being as they return to school in the Fall of 2020. Children's lives have been completely disrupted by CoVid 19; many children do not have the support they need to process and begin to understand these changes. Some schools are "opening" with Distance Learning only; some schools are "opening" with a hybrid model; and some schools are resuming with a "typical" structure. Already, there are reports of schools opening with a "typical" model and then being shut down as a result of an outbreak of the infection. This is scary and confusing for children; they must rely on the adults around them to explain and reassure them. Never has there been a greater need for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills.**

**With my son, Mike, and my colleague, Dr. Steven Morris, I have created a series of online lessons in Social and Emotional Learning that are meant to be used in this time of Distance Learning. Each is designed as a complete model for how to teach an SEL lesson. Each lesson has been recorded, includes videos to show during the lesson, and contains mini-lessons of skills and activities to practice the skills. The scripts of the recordings are copied on this page for teachers and parents to view, and the videos are included on the next page entitled SEL Videos. Please print out the script for yourself and follow along with the recording.**

**Each lesson is titled so that teachers, parents, and administrators can use the lessons as a series or as stand-alone pieces. During Distance Learning, lessons can be conducted in place of Advisory or Morning Meeting. They are designed to allow a space for children to explore and understand their feelings with their teachers and classmates. As Videos and activities are included in each online lesson, children will only need a computer, a journal, and a pen or pencil to**

participate. Because the lessons are on video, they can be paused to allow for discussion and practice of Social and Emotional Learning skills, allowing teachers and students to master concepts at their own pace of learning and understanding.

Please remember that it takes time and lots of practice to create new neural pathways (which replace old behavior patterns and underpin new ones). It is important to remember that the process of teaching Social and Emotional Learning skills is different for each group. You do not have to follow the curriculum exactly. The important thing is for children to be able to discuss their feelings and to add Social and Emotional Learning skills to their “toolbox.” Please feel free to customize the lessons for your class or group.

These lessons were designed with teacher and student well-being in mind. Each online lesson can be broken down into two lessons if time is an issue. The first three lessons comprise the “Understand Yourself” skills of Social and Emotional Learning. Human beings need to become observers of themselves first, in order to notice and utilize the messages of emotions and recognize patterns of behavior. Change is not possible until we are aware of our neural “habits” and begin to understand the value of the messages of our emotions. It is therefore advised that the first three lessons be presented in order. Lesson 6 is a review of skills presented in the first five lessons; lesson 12 will sum up the whole series.

My web site also contains articles on Emotional Intelligence and a complete online explanation of John Medina’s Brain Rules ([www.TeachEmotion.com](http://www.TeachEmotion.com)). In addition, two resources contain further lessons and are available to teachers as a resource. Choose to Change by Dr. Amy McConnell Franklin is a step-by-step guide to fostering emotional intelligence in the classroom. Putting EQ to the Test by Dr. Barbara Fatum is a summary of a small qualitative study in using EQ to help elementary and middle school-age children prepare for adversity and

**develop tools for taking standardized tests. Simply send an email with your request to the email address below to order a copy of either book.**

**If you have any questions, I can be reached at [fatumcape@aol.com](mailto:fatumcape@aol.com). I am also very happy to coach you, teach weekly online lessons, or consult with your school in this very important endeavor.**

**Warmly,**

***Barbara***