rippleeffects

**Universal Promotion
Scope and sequences for
positive youth development**

The following is an excerpt of this manual for preview purposes. The full manual is made available upon purchase.

Tools for Change

Digital tools for universal promotion

Ripple Effects personalized technology addresses the non-academic barriers to school success that students face. The positive youth development scope and sequences in this guide match to national standards for promoting social emotional competencies, "non-cognitive skills," positive mental health, and strong character.

Contents

Positive youth development

Exciting-but volatile-world is context

Today's youth will enter adulthood in a world that is dramatically different from anything their parents or teachers have previously experienced. For the first time in the history of the world, large numbers of people will live in a social and political context that is both free and diverse. Making this exciting, but potentially volatile, combination work for them will require a more sophisticated set of personal and social skills than ever has been required before.

Preventing risky behavior won't guarantee success

Avoiding school failure and staying off drugs and out of fights is not enough to equal personal and professional success.

> *Preventing high-risk behaviors . . . is not the same as preparation for the future. Indeed, an adolescent who attends school, obeys laws, and avoids drugs, is not necessarily equipped to meet the difficult demands of adulthood. Problem-free does not mean fully prepared. There must be an equal commitment to helping young people understand life's challenges and responsibilities and to developing the necessary skills to succeed as adults. What is needed is a massive conceptual shift — from thinking that youth problems are merely the principal barrier to youth development, to thinking that youth development serves as the most effective strategy for the prevention of youth problems (Pittman, 1991).*

Strength-building programs

Positive youth development programs are all those programs in schools and community organizations based on universal strength building as a way to prepare young people for the challenges of adulthood in a rapidly changing world. They may be sports, religious or social programs; they may be school-based or community-based efforts. They may involve training teachers, training students, or supporting and training family members, faith leaders, or program workers in community based organizations.

An old concept redefined

Previously the cornerstone of religious education

Positive youth development is a not a new concept. It's been part of religious education for centuries. It's been at the center of the Boy Scouts for almost a hundred years and of the YMCA 60 years longer than that (and later the Girl Scouts and YWCA). Both the Scouts and the "Y" consider their organizations non-sectarian, but they have operated within an explicitly Christian framework. It is this historical link between religious training and character education that has kept the latter out of public schools for so long.

Response to social problems in schools

Only when serious social problems began seeping into the schools, and the prevention efforts that worked best against them were shown to be those that developed students' personal strengths, did the idea of finding a way to fit character education into schools begin to take hold. To gain widespread acceptance three things needed to happen:

- It had to be separated from the context of religious tradition
- It had to be linked directly to the mission of schools
- Its efficacy had to be validated by scientific methods

All three have now been done.

Apart from sectarian religion, linked to safety and school success

Democratic institutions depend for their success on fair, inclusive policies, honest officials, and an engaged electorate. Thus fairness, honesty, inclusiveness and activism are democratic values, as well as sometimes religious ones. Empathy and assertiveness, and the abilities to manage feelings, solve problems, control impulses, stand up to peer pressure, and connect to community have all been positively linked to academic success. Thus, while these social-emotional attributes may be considered virtues in some religious traditions, they are also rightly considered school competencies, to be gained like other competencies, through instruction and practice. Finally, a growing mound of scientific evidence links specific affective, behavioral, and cognitive strategies to positive health, safety and educational outcomes.

Key concepts and objectives

Public health, public safety and public education all are linked to youth development. With funding from the DHHS, in 2002, The Social Development Research Group™ defined positive youth development programs as those that shared the following key objectives:

Shared objectives

1. Promote bonding
2. Foster resilience
3. Promote social competence
4. Promote emotional competence
5. Promote cognitive competence
6. Promote behavioral competence
7. Promote moral competence
8. Foster self-determination
9. Foster spirituality
10. Foster self-efficacy
11. Foster clear and positive identity
12. Foster belief in the future
13. Provide recognition for positive behavior
14. Provide opportunities for pro-social involvement
15. Foster pro-social norms

A broad range of programs qualify

Many of these objectives are included in programs to develop resilience, through "asset building" as defined by the Search Institute™; programs to develop social and emotional competence, as described by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning); programs to strengthen character, such as those of character.org and Character Lab; programs to promote academic achievement for every learner, consistent with federal legislation and mandates; programs to promote healthy choices, consistent with national health standards and frameworks, programs to promote civic engagement as part of a social studies curriculum, and programs to promote self-determination, starting from a positive ethnic identity.

Ripple Effects addresses all of them

Ripple Effects addresses all of these objectives with more than 100 strength-building, multimedia tutorials. (There are also hundreds of additional tutorials for secondary prevention and differentiated intervention). Individual tutorials can be combined to create curricula for a range of youth development programs configured to fit the goals and constraints of your site.

Evidence of effectiveness

Positive outcomes

Some, but not all, positive youth development programs have been shown to be effective. That is, the evidence shows a link to positive outcomes, including better school attendance, higher academic performance, healthier peer and adult interactions, improved decision- making abilities, and less substance use and risky sexual behavior (Catalano, 2002).

Value of consistency and adaptation

Research has shown that having a method to maintain implementation consistency from group to group, or site to site, is important to program success (Catalano). However, research has also shown that the ability to adapt a program to site-specific opportunities and constraints is necessary for long terms sustainability (Backer & Brounstein, 2002). The capacity to offer both fidelity and adaptation may account for the unprecedented success of Ripple Effects digital programs for promotion, prevention and intervention (Ray, 2000; Stern & Repa, 2002; Roona, 2004; DeLong, 2006).

How much time is needed?

Experts agree that programs require sufficient time for evidence of behavior change to occur, and to be measured. In general, long-term programs are more effective than one-shot programs for universal promotion (Greenberg, 2002). However, a single dose of intervention has been shown to be very effective when individualized to a particular student, facing a particular challenge. What the minimum effective dosage is has not been empirically proven. Several major universal promotion programs are designed for continuous delivery over a full school year. However, few school districts have the time to devote a whole year to such a program, so flexibility in program design is important.

Ripple Effects as stand alone or supplement

Ripple Effects for teens and middle elementary students has been shown to be an effective supplement for a range of research-based programs. It has also successfully been used as a stand-alone, long-term continuous program for positive youth development.

Designing Scope and Sequences

Scope and sequence - more than a lesson list
Many programs provide just one recommended scope and sequence, arranged by grade level. While this creates an important sense of logical order, it assumes limited content, and provides little flexibility for adapting to site-specific situations. Traditional programs often don't allow for differences in class length, teacher abilities, student backgrounds, learning and developmental differences, local curriculum requirements, district mandates, community values, or program boundaries.

Ripple Effects approach: expandable and contractible
Ripple Effects takes another approach. It has an expandable and contractible scope. Each tutorial leads to a series of logically related others through a hyperlink structure. Any topic can be covered in a single lesson, or can become the jumping off point for broader skill training of any length. The scope can be as wide or limited as you want. You can use the sample scopes that follow to adapt them to your constraints.

Be goal oriented
Start with your goal. Make sure it's realistic within the time constraints you have. Tally the total number of hours your students can devote to the program. Multiply that by 4 to get the number of tutorials you can include. (They take about 15 minutes each.) Then let the outcomes you're aiming for drive every decision about which tutorials to include. Use the sample curricula that follow as starting – not ending – points. Look at the links in the "How To" screen illustrations and the "Related topics" box to give you ideas about more topics to add. Once topics are chosen, no additional preparation time is required because everything's in the program – audio-visuals, assessment materials and tracking mechanisms.

Involve students
Some settings require a teacher designated scope and sequence, but sometimes students are better served by letting them identify the skills they think are essential for meeting a particular outcome. For instance, if positive school climate is the goal, a number of different strategies have been proven effective in meeting it. Students are often the best judge of which of those strategies is most needed in their zone of action.

Social-emotional competence

Research shows it's critical
Research has proven conclusively that social-emotional competence is critical to success at every stage of life. It's more important to academic success than IQ, more connected to professional success than intelligence and technical expertise combined.

Not just one thing
But "it" is no one thing, rather it's a constellation of abilities, which together result in a strong and healthy sense of self, and a deep and wide appreciation of others, along with skills to navigate the inevitable conflicts between these two ends. People who have these key abilities are at an advantage at every stage of life. People who lack one or more of these abilities are at risk of becoming victims – or perpetrators – of violence, of failing school, and of engaging in risky health-related behavior.

Learnable abilities
These social-emotional abilities can be learned. Hundreds of strategies have been shown effective in teaching one or more components of these key abilities. Affective, behavioral, cognitive and transpersonal strategies, alone and in various combinations, have been shown to be effective for various people, in various situations at various times. But no one strategy works best for developing all the key abilities; no one set of strategies works best with every person; and they are most effective when used in strategic combinations.

Different schema for naming and organizing
Leaders in the area of social-emotional learning have developed varying schema for naming and organizing these competencies. CASEL divides it into five core competencies; Ripple Effects follows this schema for its "Keys." NIH identifies 19 core objectives. The Search Institute names 20 key internal assets. Character.org identifies 11 key principles, while Character Lab defines key strengths. These methods of organizing each have a strong internal logic and often overlap.

Compendium of proven effective approaches
Ripple Effects provides a compendium of proven effective strategies for users to organize according to whatever schema makes the most sense to them, given their diverse social and professional contexts. Those who want a built-in scope and sequence can simply click on the "Keys" button, and get Ripple Effects' own schema. Others can use this guide for sample curricula for universal promotion, and refer to our other guides for sample prevention curricula and sample individual treatment plans.

The CASEL paradigm – Teens

Ripple Effects "Keys" match to CASEL skill clusters. You can use Ripple Effects for Teens for a 25 topic (6.5 hours) skill training course to strengthen the five core competencies CASEL has identified as essential to school and life success.

CASEL SEL core competencies	Ripple Effects SEL equivalents
Self-awareness Identifying emotions Recognizing strengths	**Knowing yourself** Knowing who you are Feelings, Strengths
Social awareness Perspective-taking Appreciating diversity	**Being aware of others** Empathy, Perspective-taking Diversity – appreciating
Self-management Managing emotions Self-motivation Goal setting	**Controlling yourself** Controlling impulses Managing feelings Self-efficacy, Goals
Responsible decision making Analyzing situations Assuming personal responsibility Respecting others Problem-solving	**Decision making** Problem-naming Responsibility, Responsibility-accepting Respect – showing it Problem-solving
Relationship skills (relationships) Communication Building relationships Negotiation Refusal	**Connecting with others** Connecting with others, Communication skills, Asking questions, Listening Making friends Conflict resolving, Respectfully disagreeing Refusal skills, Asserting yourself

The CASEL paradigm – Kids

Ripple Effects curriculum matches to CASEL skill clusters. You can use Ripple Effects for Kids for a 25 topic (8 hour) skill training course to strengthen the six core competencies CASEL has identified as essential to school and life success.

CASEL SEL categories	Ripple Effects SEL equivalents

Self-awareness
  Identifying emotions
  Recognizing strengths
	Knowing yourself
	  Knowing yourself
	  Feelings – knowing, Strengths

Social awareness
  Perspective-taking
  Appreciating diversity
	Getting a feel for others
	  Empathy, Point of view
	  Diversity – appreciating

Self-management
  Managing emotions
  Self-motivation
  Goal setting
	Controlling yourself
	  Impulse control
	  Managing feelings
	  Self-efficacy, Goals

Responsible decision making
  Analyzing situations
  Assuming personal responsibility
  Respecting others
  Problem-solving
	Decision making
	  Problem-naming
	  Responsibility
	  Respect
	  Problem solving

Relationship skills (relationships)
  Communication
 	
Building relationships
  Negotiation
  Refusal
	Connecting with others
	  Connected, Conversations,
	    Asking questions, Listening
	  Making friends
	  Resolving conflict
	  Refusal skills, Assertiveness