



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PROJECT  
CORNERSTONE**  
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

# MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL + EMOTIONAL LEARNING

## A Project Cornerstone Curriculum for Middle Schoolers

### LESSON OF THE MONTH

This month's Project Cornerstone module is an introduction to Digital Citizenship. Digital Citizenship is defined as the responsible use of technology. The objective of this module is to help students know how to be safe, smart, and kind while using digital tools. Students learn about online safety by understanding what information is private and should not be shared and what to avoid. Students learn about being smart by balancing their media use, identifying fake news, and finding sources that are credible, accurate, and true. Students also learn how to be kind and respectful in online communication using the T.H.I.N.K. method. Before speaking, posting, sharing, or texting, students should ask themselves if it is True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, and Kind. This module culminates with a description of a digital footprint and asks students to assess if their digital footprint represents who they strive to be.

### WHAT CAN WE DO AT HOME?

Be a positive role model for healthy media use and balance. Make family agreements about tech-free zones and times. This might include mealtimes, one hour before bed, or designated family times or spaces. Adults and youth should commit to these boundaries. Taking a break from technology is essential to cultivate connections and relationships.

Talk with your student about online safety. As you give your student more responsibility and autonomy with technology, ask them questions and check for understanding about safe tech use. Help your student understand your expectations and what to do if they come across something that is worrisome or makes them feel uncomfortable.

Discuss how to spot fake news and fact-check information. Talk to your students about current events and what is going on in the world around them. As you consume news, help your student identify the source, possible bias, evidence, and the credibility of images.

### WHAT IS SEL?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. Students participating in SEL programs, like Project Cornerstone, enhance their capacity to effectively manage challenges and solve problems, improve emotional, physical, and social well-being and behavior, and increase academic performance.

### RESOURCES