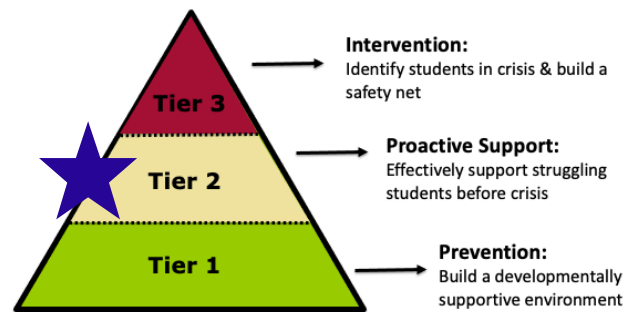


Theoretical Foundation of the Clover Groups



The Clover Groups are four social-emotional curricula that are intended for school and out-of-school time programs. The groups are designed for youth ages 10-15. They include 12, 50-60-minute sessions that are pre-planned and organized for educators for easy implementation. The groups integrate mental health, youth development, and education, and have a strong emphasis on relationships with adults and peers. The Clover Groups target youth who need pro-active support with the goal to intervene before a youth's academic performance and healthy development is impacted. Clover Groups curriculum provide a very clear structure for facilitating every activity for every session. This is incredibly beneficial for facilitators who have limited time or capacity to develop their own curriculum. While the structure is provided through the design of the curriculum, a facilitator can customize sessions and activities to best fit the needs and identities of their specific group.



“Finding ways to detect problems early and to have appropriate interventions in place is critical to a healthy learning community”

Gil Noam, Ed.D, Dr. Habil

Aligned with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

The Clover Groups are aligned with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). These groups are designed to help Tier 2 youth who are experiencing a significant imbalance in their social-emotional competencies and are potentially at-risk for academic, emotional, and behavioral problems. The groups leverage the youth's relationships with adults and peers to develop and practice their social-emotional competencies.



Youth can be pro-actively screened for participation in a Clover Group using the Holistic Student Assessment and educator feedback.

Aligned with CASEL SAFE Practices

All Clover Groups curriculum align with CASEL's "SAFE practices." SAFE is an acronym for four key ingredients to social-emotional programs:

- **Sequenced:** Connected and coordinated activities to foster skills development. All Clover Groups are not only intentionally sequenced as one moves through the curriculum session to session, but also through the design of each component of an individual session. For example, all groups use intentional opening and closing rituals, and have both group

activities and individual reflection time, all of which are structured to build off of one another.

- **Active:** Active forms of learning to help students master new skills and attitudes. Youth actively participate in Clover Groups through many learning modalities such as journaling, team and group games, photography, the arts and group discussions, to name just a few.
- **Focused:** A component that emphasizes developing personal and social skills. All Clover Groups have a specific component where youth focus on and discuss the skills that they learned throughout the activity for the day. They both reflect on the immediate lessons learned, while also discussing how to apply these skills in their own personal lives.
- **Explicit:** Targeting specific social and emotional skills. Lastly, all Clover Groups explicitly target specific skill gaps in alignment with the Clover Model Theory of Development.

Designed Using a Research-Based Theory of Change

The Clover Groups are based on the Clover Model, which is a developmental process theory developed by Dr. Gil Noam. The Clover Model describes the four major domains of youth development: active engagement, assertiveness, belonging, and reflection. Through research and clinical and classroom observations, these four domains represent the dimensions necessary to understand and support the needs of children and adolescents.



- **Active engagement** represents the desire to actively and physically engage with the world through the body.
- **Assertiveness** represents the development of a voice and desire to express wants and needs.
- **Belonging** represents a desire to build connection with peers and adults.
- **Reflection** represents a desire for self-reflection and identity exploration.

Although every youth possesses all four clover domains, it is rare that anyone has equal strength in all four. It is far more common that they rely more on one or two competencies than the others. For example, a youth who loves being active may forget to stop and reflect on the impact of their behavior before they act. Using the Clover Model, this individual would be described as having a large active engagement leaf, but a small reflection leaf. The goal of the model is to use a youth's strengths in a particular domain to cultivate their less developed competencies to enhance their overall balance. Instead of focusing on getting the student with a strength in active engagement to be less active, the Clover Model, encourages the support of the student's innate strength, while helping the youth gain self-management skills by teaching them how to reflect on their actions.. These four social-emotional competencies are linked to academic success, positive peer and adult relationships, and mental health.

REFERENCES

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