

## **Student Well-being: A Collective Responsibility**

**Dr. Jean Clinton**

### **Social and Emotional Skill Development**

DR. JEAN CLINTON: Education started out as lead to educate, to lead out. Start it out in a very different place than where we've been recently. So even as far back as Socrates and Plutarch, you know, they talked about education as being more about igniting the flame than filling the pail. I call that "stuffing the duck," that we've thought that we need to create people who know stuff, instead of learners who know how to learn.

Development of the ability to form relationships with others, and peers and adults, the ability to express and manage your emotions, and the ability to explore your environment really requires the development of social and emotional skills, right? So how can we make sure that kids who are coming in as young as three are developing those skills? Well, I think we're not systematically enough thinking about building social and emotional learning into starting with our K to 3. I would be recommending, and I am recommending, that each board really looks deeply at what are we using now for social and emotional regulation and learning? Are we just thinking that it's when a kid is a problem, we bring in social and emotional learning, and say instead what we need is to say that the development of social and emotional skills is as foundational as the other learning objectives of reading and writing, and others? So that means that we have every single school board will select an evidence-based program that will build those skills.

As well, they will all know, if I got to be queen, they would all know the work of my friend, Stuart Shanker, with self-reg not as a program, but self-reg as a way of understanding and knowing kids. Helping kids to have the tools to manage, helping kids to have the tools to be more self-aware -- all of those things. Self-reg and socio and emotional go absolutely hand in hand. So social and emotional skills are those skills that you need to be able to, how do you connect with others, you know? How do you form relationships? How do you start a conversation? Some of our little ones coming in don't know those skills. Many of our middle school kids and our teenage kids never actually learned how to do that properly or well. So how do you have awareness of the other, and connect with them? How do you have self-awareness? So social and emotional skills are about self-awareness. How do you recognize when something's getting you going, when something is pushing your buttons? How do you recognize when you're over tired, and you're angry? So that's self-awareness. How well are you aware of the needs of others?

So they are the kinds of things that social and emotional skills are about; it's how can I be in the world with you? What are the things are needed for me to be in the world

with you, and what are the things that are needed for me to be in the world with myself in a way that feels right and good? So self-regulation is very connected to social and emotional learning. Self-regulation, in Stuart's words, is, what is the energy that's required to be in a situation, to be there with a person and with the enticement and the conflict or challenge, how much energy does it take? And how much energy, what do you need to do to get back into calm, alert and learning? So self-regulation has many different domains; biological, you know, if you're hungry, if you're itchy, if you're tired. Kids need to learn -- and parents, by the way, and adults could do a whole lot to learn about self-reg.

But knowing about the biological domain, you know, what's making me feel this way? Because when you're four or five or thirteen, and you're overtired, if you don't recognize your body cues of tiredness, then you're going to be cranky, or you're going to be asleep, if you're thirteen, on the desk at school. So reading those, the biological domain, the emotional domain. Do you recognize your what emotionally is getting you going? How hot are you, or how cold? How far as you pushing away? In the domain of pro-social, how well are you able to read others? And how much does when somebody looks away make you think, they're talking about me. So recognizing all of those things. They're some of the things. I'd strongly recommend people go to [Google Self-Reg](#) and learn more about Stuart's work.