

Self-Management

Adapted from:
Urban Institute. (2017) Self -Management. *Perform Well*.

Self-Management is one of the social-emotional areas of learning identified by the Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Self-management refers to the ability of an individual to regulate their emotions and resulting behaviors in ways that society considers acceptable. This includes how the individual copes with unmet wants or needs, perseveres when faced with obstacles, and sets goals for himself/herself (Bandy & Moore, 2010).

Appropriate self-management can help students perform better in school, can reduce delinquent behaviors, and can help individuals perform better on the job. For example, an inappropriate display of anger (like shouting at or threatening a teacher or a boss) may cause an individual to be punished by removal from the classroom or place of employment. Further escalated displays of anger can result in punching or kicking of objects or people which may result in charges of battery or damage to property.

The National Research Council (2002) associates the indicators of self-management (self-control, perseverance, stress management and goal-setting) with personal and social assets that facilitate positive youth development in the area of psychological and emotional development. Psychological and emotional development is one of four asset areas identified by the NRC; the others are physical development, intellectual development, and social development. The NRC indicates that having more assets is better than having a few, that the assets tend to work together to compensate for weaker areas, and that having assets across the four areas is important.

Moilanen (2007) points out that self-management has both short-term and long-term dimensions, especially as children get older. She describes the difference this way: "Short-term self-regulation is operationalized as impulse, attentional or emotional control in the "heat of the moment," or regulation in the immediate context. For example, children or adolescents might meet a momentary goal to remember a phone number by using a strategy such as rehearsal.

Alternately, this can also take the form of squelching inappropriate behavior or emotions before they are enacted, such as inhibiting fidgeting. In contrast, long-term self-regulation involves the control of impulses or direction of effort over a longer period of time. This duration may last several weeks, months or years. For example, an adolescent might save their wages from an after-school job for many weeks or months in order to buy an expensive digital music device. Long-term self-regulation may also involve substantial planning, such as plotting a course of study in college in order to meet career goals.” (p. 836).

Strategies and programs, and therefore assessments, may focus on reducing or preventing problematic behaviors or on helping children and youth develop the skills and assets to better manage themselves. It is important to consider the focus of your program when selecting an assessment tool. It is also important to consider how assets might work together thus measuring more than one indicator may be important to demonstrating the improvements children and youth have made in your program.

Indicators of self-management include self-control, perseverance, stress management and goal-setting.