

## California Adult Education Digital Learning Guidance

### Chapter 7: Fostering Healthy, Equitable, and Inclusive Digital Communities

#### Think about:

- How does integrating social-emotional learning into the classroom or digital environment benefit learners?

**Community Building** – Creating a healthy and inclusive online learning community requires intentional effort from adult educators. Strategies include fostering relationships among learners, encouraging collaboration, and promoting positive digital communication. Building a supportive classroom community goes beyond academic content and helps facilitate deep learning and meaningful connections.

**Social-Emotional Learning** – Social and emotional learning (SEL) is crucial for successful learning, and adult educators play a vital role in fostering SEL skills. SEL encompasses goal setting, empathy, positive relationships, responsible decision-making, and emotional management. Integrating SEL into the classroom environment, whether physical or digital, helps learners feel supported and accepted. Educational institutions can address learners' social-emotional needs by providing resources and creating safe and supportive learning environments. Building positive relationships is key, and educators can engage in self-reflection, be culturally competent, communicate positively, have high expectations while providing support, apply adult learning theories, involve learners in goal-setting and self-regulation, and create healthy, equitable, and inclusive learning environments. Adult educators should also facilitate opportunities for learners to connect with peers through collaborative activities. While addressing systemic inequalities and the effects of past negative educational experiences or chronic stress may pose challenges, schools can empower learners and support their social-emotional well-being. By prioritizing SEL, educators contribute to a positive and enriching learning experience for their students.

**Cultivating Educator Well-Being** – Adult educator SEL is crucial for building relationships, managing classrooms, and modeling SEL skills. Institutional support is important for educator well-being, including gathering data, providing time for relationship-building, considering digital learning impacts, offering support and access to mental health resources, integrating SEL in professional development, and providing well-being activities. Regular check-ins and communication are essential. Appendix A of the Guidance offers additional resources for cultivating educator and staff well-being.

**Digital Citizenship** – Digital citizenship is essential in today's digital world. Adult educators can promote positive digital citizenship by fostering inclusive, equitable, and culturally aware practices. ISTE's SkillRise and DigCitCommit programs provide frameworks for adult and K–12 learners to develop digital citizenship competencies, such as expanding perspectives, using technology safely and ethically, engaging in civic activities, making informed decisions, and being mindful of online actions and safety. The classroom serves as a supportive environment for cultivating digital citizenship skills and modeling positive behavior.

#### For consideration:

- What strategies can adult educators employ to foster a healthy and inclusive online learning community?
- What steps can educational institutions take to promote positive digital citizenship and cultivate a safe and inclusive online environment?