

## Up2Us Sports + SEL Approach

- Up2Us Sports is a national coalition of organizations committed to using sports to provide youth with opportunities to live healthier lives, increase academic success, and reduce risky behavior.
- Up2Us Sports' flagship program, *Up2Us Coach*, is the first AmeriCorps-sponsored national service program to train young adults to coach and mentor kids in low-income communities in major cities, including Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, and Philadelphia.
- Across the U.S., Up2Us Coach places coaches in over 100 community- and sports-based organizations that work in both in- and out-of-school contexts with youth in grades 3-12.
- Up2Us Coaches are trained to develop social and emotional learning (SEL) skills among youth. Up2Us Coaches intentionally target specific periods during a practice to develop SEL skills (see summary of SEL development at an Up2Us Coach-led practice below).
- Outside of training coaches and working with youth, Up2Us Sports advises its community-based partner organizations on how to further their SEL practice and evaluation (Figure 1).



## Historic SEL Measurement Strategy + Results

- In 2015, Up2Us Sports worked with School to School International (STS) with support from the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation to develop a survey tool to measure “high impact attributes” (HIAs).
- The eight HIAs included: self-awareness, positive identity, situational awareness, future focus, plan-B thinking, discipline, social confidence, pro-social connections, and well-being.
- The HIA survey was a promising development for Up2Us Sports and the broader sports-based youth development (SBYD) field in the United States and globally. Since the development of the tool in 2015, Up2Us Sports has shared the survey with 58 partners from four countries, providing SBYD organizations all over the world with a useful resource for growing and improving their own measurement strategy.
- Previous studies have shown promising effects of the Up2Us Coach program on youths' SEL skills:
  - In a 2015-16 New Orleans-based quasi-experimental study, 6th to 12th graders working with Up2Us Sports coaches showed significantly greater improvements in future focus and plan B thinking than youth in the comparison group ( $p < .05$ ).
  - In a 2016-17 study, youth demonstrated significant improvements in self-awareness, positive identity, and social confidence from pre- to post-program ( $p < 0.05$ ).



## Updated SEL Framework + Way Forward

- In 2019, Up2Us Sports updated its framework to align its SEL strategy and approach with present trends and findings, using CASEL's SEL framework as a model (Figure 1).

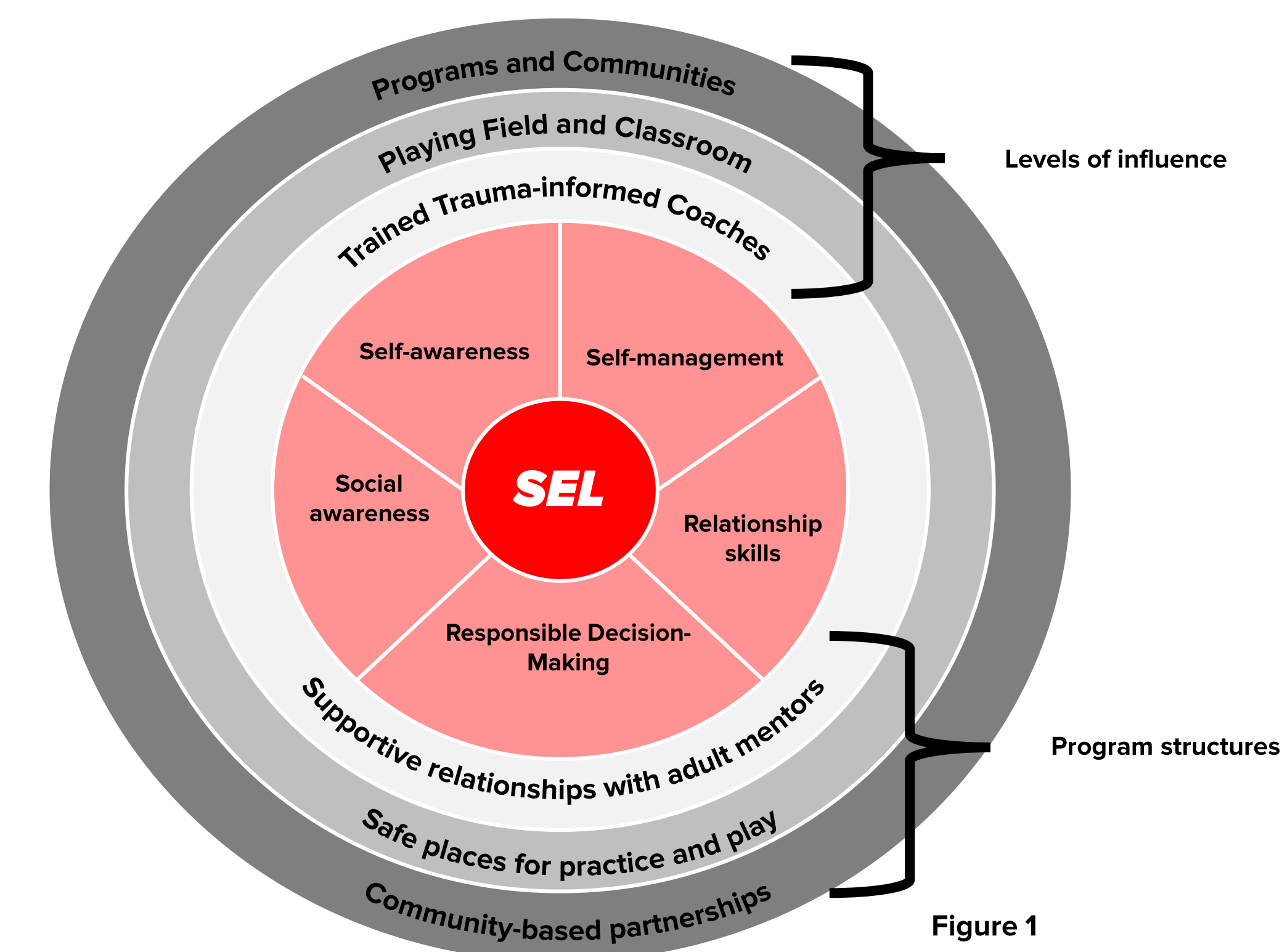


Figure 1  
Adapted from CASEL: <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

- Future SEL work at Up2Us Sports will involve work at three levels of the organization (Table 1).

Table 1

Research + Evaluation	Curriculum + Training	Program Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Piloting its newly updated survey.</li> <li>✓ Understanding the role of implementation fidelity in the development of SEL outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Refining its coach curriculum and training to meet the SEL needs of different youth developmental stages and personal contexts (e.g. experiences of trauma, gender, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Standardizing program models to grow Up2Us Coaches' SEL competencies.</li> </ul>

## SEL at an Up2Us Coach-led Practice



### Transition In / Informal Time

The transition into practice allows players to adjust physically, mentally, and emotionally. During this time, Up2Us Coaches create opportunities for players to interact with coaching staff and peers through social conversation and opt-in activities.



### Warm Up

The warm up is a key time for players to prepare their mind and body for exercise and play. This process facilitates the mind-body connection and draws awareness to how mental and emotional feelings are felt in the body.



### Play

Play involves activities to help players see their successes and creates an environment where they can be challenged to take safe risks. Getting a “win” in one sport activity can lead to greater self-confidence in other activities – and even to overcome other life challenges.



### Cool Down

Cool down is a space for players to practice the skills of self-management through, for example, group huddles or light activities. Cool down involves players reflecting on the practice's outcomes of the day, their engagement in the practice, and how they can apply the practice's lessons to their life.



### Informal Time / Transition Out

This transition allows for players to prepare for whatever may be coming next. During this time, Up2Us Coaches remain accessible to players who may not be leaving immediately or seeking connection without the pressure of practice or other players.