



DAVID P. WEIKART
CENTER FOR YOUTH
PROGRAM QUALITY

Foundations and Self-Awareness of **Emotional Development**

Participant Notebook

Name: _____



Improving & Aligning
Policies



Planning and Partnering
for Impact



Strengthening Practices
and Programs

About the Forum

The Forum for Youth Investment provides products and services to help leaders improve partnerships, policies and practices to change the odds so all young people are ready for college, work and life. These products and services are based on best practices in youth development and on our experience working with hundreds of communities around the country since our founding in 1998.

About the Forum's Weikart Center

David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality is a leader in empowering education and human service leaders to adapt, implement and scale best-in-class, research-validated quality improvement systems to advance child and youth development. Training and technical assistance in quality improvement system design, effective performance data and lower stakes accountability has helped OST networks across the country be successful, scale-able and sustainable. The Weikart Center is a critical part of the Forum for Youth Investment's overall effort to build leadership capacity to advance readiness and equity.

Emotional Development


In this workshop, we lay the foundations and self-awareness of our own emotional development and knowledge. The purpose is to enhance our practices as staff who support emotion management and empathy in the youth we serve.

Emotion Management (abilities to be aware of and constructively handle both positive and challenging emotions) and empathy (relating to others with acceptance, understanding, and sensitivity to their diverse experiences) are two of the six social-emotional learning (SEL) domains outlined in *Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices in Social and Emotional Learning*.

Commonly referred to as the *Thrive Guide*, this publication outlines the research and findings generated from a partnership with the Susan Crown Exchange, the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and staff teams from eight exemplary out-of-school time programs focused on social-emotional skill building with opportunity youth. The Thrive Guide is an integrated set of stories that reveal a framework of the youth experiences and staff practices needed for effective SEL to occur within youth programs.

More information about the Thrive Guide—including a free digital download of the publication—can be found at selpractices.org.

EMOTION MANAGEMENT Abilities to be aware of and constructively handle both positive and challenging emotions.




Key youth experiences

- Youth experience a range of positive and negative emotions in a safe context.
- Youth have opportunities to practice and develop healthy and functional emotion skills.

Staff practices

- Staff create and adjust the structure of daily activities to accommodate youth's processing of emotion.
- Staff model healthy emotion strategies within the context of caring, mutually-respectful relationships with youth.
- Staff provide coaching to youth about handling and learning from their ongoing emotional experiences.

EMPATHY Relating to others with acceptance, understanding, and sensitivity to their diverse perspectives and experiences.



Key youth experiences

- Youth explore social structure and power in relation to themselves and others.
- Youth share their stories and listen to the stories of others.
- Youth practice relating to others with acceptance and understanding.

Staff practices

- Staff provide programs with appropriate structure for sharing experience and promoting equity.
- Staff model empathy skills with youth.

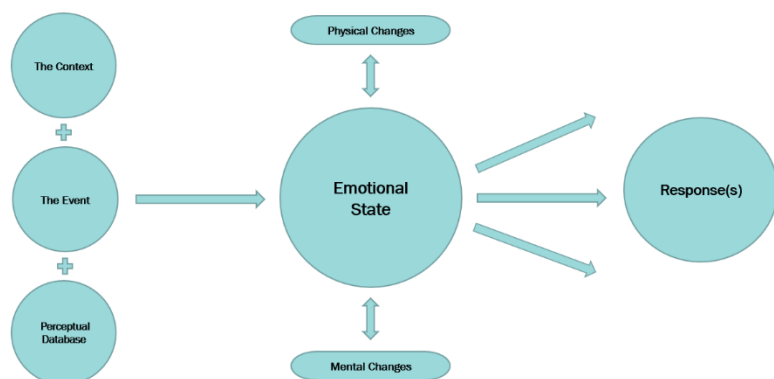
Ekman and the Atlas of Emotions

	Anger	Fear	Disgust	Sadness	Enjoyment
More intense	vengeful furious/ infuriated enraged seething hostile hateful outraged spiteful mad pissed off defiant upset surly indignant resentful argumentative obstinate exasperated frustrated aggravated irritated annoyed peevish perturbed	petrified terrified hysterical horrificed desperate panicky alarmed threatened afraid dread fearful frightened anxious trepidation insecure intimidated nervous vulnerable worried agitated tense suspicious restless bothered uneasy unsettled	loathing revulsion abhorrence repugnance aversion	suicidal anguished miserable distraught despairing grieving despondent depressed dismal mournful sorrowful rejected melancholy weepy jealous lonely envious discouraged low unhappy	ecstatic elated exuberant gleeful joyful high excited delighted cheerful mischievous amused wonder awe satisfied content pleased
Less intense			distaste dislike	disappointed resigned pensive	

Research over the past several decades has outlined various theories around the number of emotions humans express. Paul Ekman is an American psychologist and author renowned for his research in emotions and facial expressions. In the 1950s, he identified six basic human emotions: anger; fear; disgust; sadness; enjoyment; and surprise. For the purpose of our workshop, we are going to focus on the first five.

These basic emotions range in intensity, and have a set of sub-emotions and feelings associated with them, as noted in the chart to the left.

Ekman is also a pioneer in emotion mapping—a way to understand emotions and the responses we have to them.



Imagine some **event** happening. Then, think about the **context**. The context influences the way we experience the emotion. Our current state of being (hungry, tired, microaggressions, etc.), as well as our personal histories, are preconditions that impact how we perceive events that happen to us. Also consider the **perceptual database**—how we see the world, which is a result of our personal history and universal scripts.

These scripts are outlines of repeated emotional experiences—some inherited, some acquired. Then we may have **physical changes**—the automatic bodily sensations of our emotion—as well as **mental changes**—the immediate, felt experience of our emotion. This mix of factors then leads to our **emotional state**—which is our combined physical and mental changes. Then, we have a **response** of some kind. A response can be constructive (a response that helps you in your goals), destructive (a response that gets in the way of your goals), or ambiguous (a response that could be helpful or unhelpful—sometimes we aren't sure).

The same event can elicit a different emotional response in different people, or even in the same person given different circumstances. There is no one right or wrong way to experience an emotion or event. For more ways to explore the atlas of emotions and Ekman's work, visit atlasofemotions.org.

Managing Emotional Activation

Experiencing big emotions is a natural and normal part of being alive. Our emotions are a way that we experience and respond to events that are happening in our lives. There are times, though, when our emotional response is not in proportion to what has happened. This is emotional activation.

Everyone has certain areas of unusual sensitivity (like hot buttons) just waiting to be stimulated. The limbic system in the brain—sometimes referred to as our lizard brain—is responsible for our fight-flight-or-freeze response and is activated when we have those “flip your lid” moments. It's easy to assume our lizard brain is problematic and needs to be reined in or controlled. Remember, though, that this is our survival brain, and it serves us well by protecting us from harm in many different forms (physical, emotional, psychological, etc.).

All human beings carry wounds from our past. Many of us have been hurt by oppression due to race, gender, sexual orientation, or ability status. Many of us have experienced trauma of some kind, including historical or generational trauma, as well as shame. Even those from privileged backgrounds or relatively “healthy” families often carry feelings of loss, anxiety over self-worth, and fear of failure. Repeated emotional experiences begin to establish neural pathways—a kind of emotional wiring. For some of us, our lizard brain has been in overdrive due to experiences of ongoing discrimination, oppression, poverty, trauma, etc., which can have harmful effects on our physical and mental health.

Understanding our lizard brain isn't about stopping it from happening (you can't). It's about knowing when it's happening so we can learn from it when we are back to operating in the prefrontal cortex of our brain—or our wizard brain.

Emotion Word Bank

		Basic Universal Emotions					
		Anger	Fear	Disgust	Sadness	Enjoyment– Happiness	Surprise
More intense	vengeful	petrified	loathing	suicidal	ecstatic	aghast	
	furious/ infuriated	terrified	revulsion	anguished	elated	shocked	
	enraged	hysterical	abhorrence	miserable	exuberant	incredulous	
	seething	horrified	repugnance	distraught	gleeful		
	hostile	desperate		despairing	joyful	astonished	
	hateful	panicky	aversion	grieving	high	astounded	
	outraged	alarmed		despondent	excited	amazed	
	spiteful	threatened		depressed	delighted		
	mad	afraid		dismal			
	pissed off	dread		mournful	cheerful		
	defiant	fearful		sorrowful	mischievous		
	upset	frightened		rejected	amused		
Less intense	surly	anxious		melancholy			
	indignant	trepidation		weepy	wonder		
	resentful	insecure		jealous	awe		
	argumentative	intimidated		lonely			
	obstinate	nervous		envious			
	exasperated	vulnerable		discouraged			
	frustrated	worried		low			
	aggravated	agitated		unhappy	satisfied		
	irritated	tense			content		
	annoyed	suspicious		disappointed	pleased		
	peevied	restless	distaste	resigned			
	perturbed	bothered	dislike	pensive			
	uneasy						
	unsettled				startled		

Emotion Word Bank

	Confusion	Shame	Uncaring	Peaceful	Confident
More intense	bewildered befuddled flustered perplexed disoriented skeptical baffled puzzled scattered troubled cynical doubtful dubious distrustful uncertain hesitant indecisive unsure unfocused	humiliated mortified ashamed worthless remorseful guilty idiotic embarrassed inadequate burdened controlled helpless hopeless impotent powerless foolish apologetic regretful inhibited lost restricted	exhausted selfish bored busy ambivalent apathetic unmotivated detached indifferent lethargic lazy tired passive nonchalant unconcerned	Loving affectionate aroused devoted intimate caring tender warm thankful grateful appreciative gratified indebted obliged relieved mellow peaceful	powerful bold strong proud sure capable optimistic productive trusting attentive eager energetic challenged inspired illuminated curious hopeful keen grounded centered focused interested
Less intense					

The Art & Skill of Managing Emotional Activation Guided Meditation

Please practice self-care during this exercise. Go only as deep as you are comfortable with. If you need support at any time, please let a facilitator know, or do whatever self-care works for you.

We're inviting you to participate in this activity because in our work, we get emotionally activated. Our youth do or say things that are hot buttons for deep emotional responses in us. In order to be more effective at delivering and supporting SEL in our youth, we need to understand our own emotional landscape, as well as how to manage it. This exercise is an opportunity to reflect on a time when things did or did not go well.

Here are a few techniques for reflecting on this experience:

- Bring dual awareness by making sure you have one foot here and one foot there.
- See the memory through a strong glass wall.
- See the memory as if you are watching clouds go by in the sky.
- Look at the situation with a bird's eye view.
- Look at the situation as if you were in the balcony of a theatre, watching the scene unfold on the stage below.

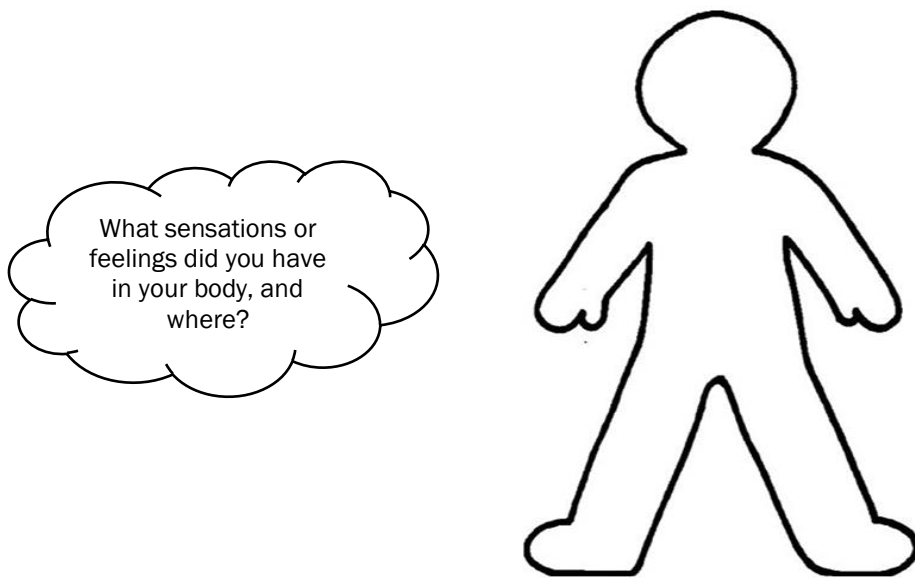
Take a deep breath, and then begin your meditation:

Think back to a time you had a very strong emotional experience. A time when, as you look back on it, maybe your emotional response was out of proportion with what actually happened. Something did happen, though.

Without letting yourself go into the full emotional experience, try to think back on what was happening in this moment. Maybe you had an argument with someone you care about? Maybe it was the most joyful moment of your life? Maybe it was a loss you experienced? Maybe something didn't go the way you wanted?

The Art & Skill of Managing Emotional Activation

- In one sentence, what is the heart of the heart of it? What happened?
- What story were you telling about the other person or about yourself?
- What, if anything, did you say out loud? What did you do or not do?



- Think back on your life. When was another time when you had a similar set of feelings that elicited the same kind of emotional response?
- What insights do you have about the ways our personal histories shape how we interpret situations or interactions we have in the present?
- When you are emotionally activated, what helps you shift out of this emotionally charged experience?

Reflection Questions

1. Something I want to learn more about (or work on understanding) emotion is:

2. Respond to any or all of the following about the guided reflection:

What emotions did you feel during this activity? Where did you notice them show up in your body?

Did you fight, flight, and/or freeze when asked to do this guided reflection?

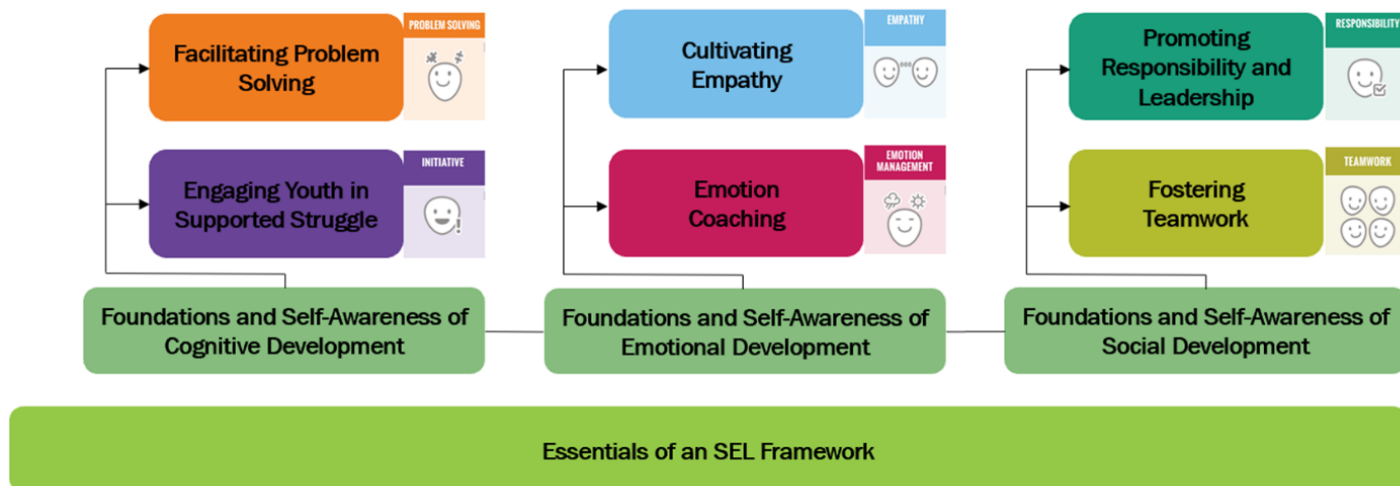
When a difficult memory surfaces and you feel emotionally activated by it, how do you manage your feelings?

Implementation: You First

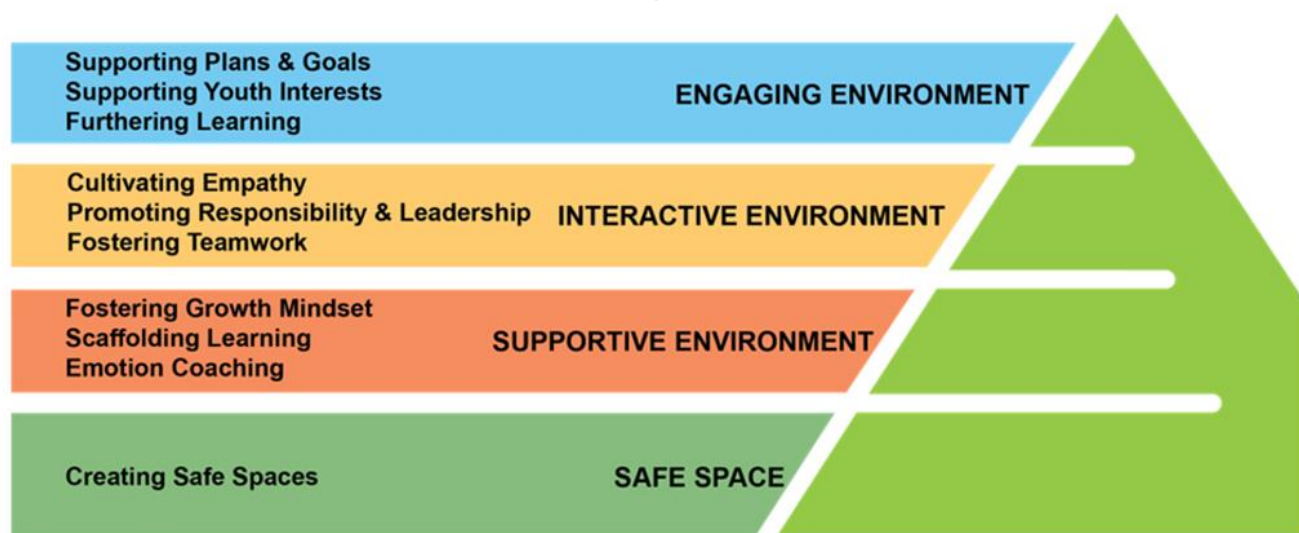
In order to support my youth around their own emotional experiences, something I want/need to do for myself is:

A commitment I am making to myself around my own emotional self-awareness is:

Social Emotional Learning Methods Sequence with *Preparing Youth to Thrive* Domains



Social Emotional Learning Pyramid of Program Quality with SEL PQA Scales



Preparing Youth to Thrive	Youth Work Methods	SEL Methods	SEL PQA
			ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT
Problem Solving	Active Learning	Facilitating Problem Solving	Furthering Learning
			Support connections to previous knowledge
			Link examples to principles
			Encourage extending knowledge
			Encourage logical reasoning
Initiative	Youth Voice		Supporting Youth Interests
			Provide open-ended choice
			Provide multiple opportunities for choice
			Support creativity
Problem Solving, Initiative	Planning and Reflection	Facilitating Problem Solving	Supporting Plans and Goals
			Set up planning opportunities
			Ensure young people record or represent plans
			Facilitate monitoring progress toward goal
			Support problem-solving alternatives
			INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT
Teamwork	Cooperative Learning	Fostering Teamwork	Fostering Teamwork
			Promote active collaboration
			Establish shared goals
			Provide group-process opportunities
Responsibility	Youth Voice	Promoting Responsibility & Leadership	Promoting Responsibility and Leadership
			Assign responsibility for tasks
			Support carrying out responsibilities independently
			Provide mentoring opportunities
			Provide leadership opportunities
Empathy	Building Community	Cultivating Empathy	Cultivating Empathy
			Structure activity for sharing and listening
			Encourage understanding other's emotions
			Structure activities for showing kindness
			Support valuing of differences
			SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT
Teamwork	Cooperative Learning Building Community	Fostering Teamwork	Fostering Teamwork
			Promote active collaboration
			Establish shared goals
			Provide group-process opportunities
Responsibility	Youth Voice	Promoting Responsibility & Leadership	Promoting Responsibility and Leadership
			Assign responsibility for tasks
			Support carrying out responsibilities independently
			Provide mentoring opportunities
			Provide leadership opportunities
Initiative	Ask-Listen-Encourage	Engaging Youth in Supported Struggle	Fostering Growth Mindset
			Guide young people to self-correct
			Use non-evaluative language
			Attribute achievement to effort
			Creating Safe Spaces
Safe Space (Curriculum Features)	Building Community, Reframing Conflict	Fostering Teamwork	Foster positive emotional climate
	Building Community,	Fostering Teamwork	Convey warmth and respect
	Structure & Clear Limits	Cultivating Empathy	Provide support for safe space
	Reframing Conflict		Demonstrate positive group management style
	Building Community	Cultivating Empathy	Demonstrate mutual accountability
			Show active inclusion