Emotion Coaching

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.

Emotion Coaching

In this workshop, we explore how and why to coach youth through their emotions. Referred to as "emotion management" in *Preparing Youth to Thrive*, this skill is defined as "abilities to be aware of and constructively handle both positive and challenging emotions."

Emotions are integral to all parts of life. Research shows that emotion management skills also support young people's cognitive and social development. Research shows differentiating and understanding emotions helps people handle their emotions better.

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.

We are all influenced by our culture, identities, and personal histories. Knowing what we bring to the table when working with others experiencing big emotions of any kind is a critical skill and requires self-awareness to ensure we do not unintentionally project our own emotional experiences on our youth.

This is not only relevant to conflict situations and difficult emotions. We scaffold handling difficult emotions by asking youth how they feel about everyday occurrences or about progress on goals and activities in the program, such as asking about how a presentation went, what they were most proud of, etc. Emotion coaching is part of whatever program youth workers are leading; it is not therapy or specialized SEL time elsewhere in programming.

The Value of Learning Emotion Coaching

The idea of emotion coaching stems from research on parenting from Gottman, Katz, and Hooven. Emotion coaching involves accepting and validating youth's emotions and not trying to "shut down" sadness or anger by dismissing it or expressing disapproval. It also involves helping/coaching young people in ways to handle their emotions.

Adults can practice emotion coaching that is respectful of youth's emotional autonomy by:

- using deep understanding of youth and their emotional styles to monitor, appraise and respond in the moment to youth's ongoing emotions;
- fostering emotional awareness and reflection; helping youth frame the situation and emotion; and,
- encouraging problem solving in response to challenging emotions and the situations creating them-- suggesting strategies for dealing with them.

In emotion coaching, we want to be mindful to not be dismissive or disapproving. Imagine a youth confesses to a staff member, "I really wanted to be the captain of the team." An emotion coaching response might be, "You seem sad about that. It can be disappointing when you had your heart set on getting a certain role." A dismissive response to this might be, "Well, that's no big deal. The most important thing is working together." A disapproving response might be," You should be happy you are even on the team! We can't have everyone selfishly wanting their own way!"

One way to organize these practices is by using the acronym LUVE, which stands for Label, Understand, Validate, and Express.

L	U	V	E
Label	Understand	Validate	Express

• Label emotions casually throughout normal programming.
• Encourage young people to describe and label emotions as well.
• Support increased emotional vocabulary
• Differentiate emotions to support emotion management.
	• Emotions are a composite of your brain interpreting bodily sensations, current context, your emotional history with related experiences and the shared social experience around that context or event.
	• Emotions are expressed both in similar and individual ways.
	• Having words for emotions enables us to have shared experience around them.
		• Listen empathetically.
		  o Give full attention. Be observant.
		  o Do not try to fix.
		• Validate the emotion.
		  o First, identify a specific emotion.
		  o Second, offer justification for their emotion.
		  o Match their energy—don't sound upbeat and cheerful when they are down, or matter-of-fact if they are super excited.
		  o You don't have to agree with them.
		• [Problem solve, encourage if needed.]
		• Validate again.
			• All emotions are okay, and different expressions have different results and/or consequences.
			  o Emotions do not justify hitting, name-calling, etc.
			• Allow time to sit with "hard" emotions—don't try to help problem solve right away.
			  o "Your anger at being betrayed like that is a big emotion to wrestle with. Let me know if or when you want to talk about what to do with it."
			• Give tools for modulating and managing emotion:
			  o Exercise
			  o Mindfulness and breathing
			  o Reframing
			  o Time out/alone time
			  o Emotional support

An important piece to note about this model is the "Express" portion is not the same for every young person. Cultural norms about what is appropriate or expected emotional expression varies widely, with cultural groups that are more expressive, or less expressive, or comfortable expressing only certain emotions, existing in many places across the globe. Research has found variation even between neighboring cultural groups, for example, in places such as Nepal and Chile (Halberstadt, Oertwig, and Riqulme, 2020). Beliefs and values about emotion and emotion expression undergird these norms, but people may be unaware of these beliefs.

Expressing emotions means being able to decide how and when to express your emotions, deciding what is constructive in the situation or what form of expression will help you meet your goals. Expressing emotion intentionally may or may not mean expressing an emotion in the way that makes others comfortable, but it advocates for factoring in those considerations.

Preparing Youth to Thrive

*Emotion Management Standards and Practice Indicators (p. 35)*

KEY YOUTH EXPERIENCES   YE

RANGE OF EMOTIONS. Youth experience a range of positive and challenging emotions in a safe context.

(EM1) Youth engage in program work and activities in which emotions occur, are expressed, and are recognized as an important and often valuable component of human experience.

(EM2) Emotions are experienced within a shared program culture (e.g., rules, norms) structured to make emotional expression and reflection safe and supported.

EMOTION AWARENESS AND SKILL. Youth practice and develop healthy and functional emotion skills.

Youth practice (EM3) being aware of, identifying, and naming emotions, (EM4) reasoning about causes and effects of emotion, (EM5) using strategies for healthy coping with strong emotions and for harnessing emotions to advance the program work.

STAFF PRACTICES   SP

STRUCTURE. Staff create and adjust the structure of daily activities to accommodate youth's processing of emotion.

(EM6) Staff create time, space, or rituals within program activities for youth to process and learn from emotion.
(EM7) Staff adapt program activities to respond to youth's emotional readiness and needs.

MODELING. Staff model healthy strategies for dealing with emotion within the context of caring, mutually-respectful relationships with youth.

(EM8) Staff model healthy strategies for dealing with emotions such as:
  a) active listening, remaining calm during intense episodes, and using problem-solving methods;
  b) communicating effectively and honestly about emotions (including their own);
  c) respectfully acknowledging and validating emotions in others.

COACHING. Staff provide coaching to youth about handling and learning from their ongoing emotional experiences.

(EM9) Staff provide coaching that is respectful of youth's emotional autonomy, including:
  a) using deep understanding of youth and their emotional styles to monitor, appraise, and respond in the moment to youth's ongoing emotions;
  b) ostering emotional awareness and reflection; helping youth frame the situation and emotion;
  c) encouraging problem solving in response to challenging emotions and the situations creating them; suggesting strategies for dealing with them.

A free digital download of *Preparing Youth to Thrive* is available at selpractices.org

What's Our Lens?

Use the spaces within the lenses (or outside) to record your reflections as you watch each clip.

- What sensations do you notice in your body and where are they?
    - o Tightening/relaxing muscles in shoulders, butterflies in your stomach, throat closing, etc.
- What is the running commentary in your mind saying? What do you notice you are thinking about the people in the videos?
    - o *I can't believe they are doing that; They need to reign it in or calm down; Why do they have to do/say that; That's dumb, ridiculous,* etc.
- What emotion or emotions do you think each person is experiencing?
    - o Come up with the emotion words or labels for the emotions that seem to fit the best with what is shown.
- Which expressions of emotions are you more or less comfortable with? How do you know?
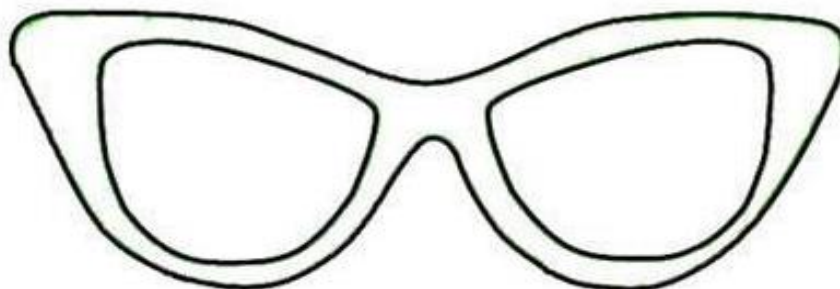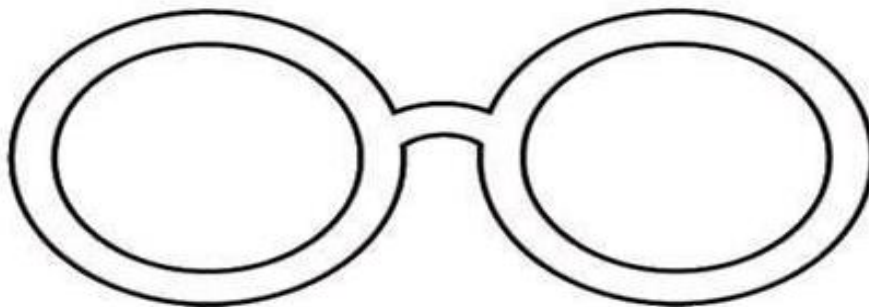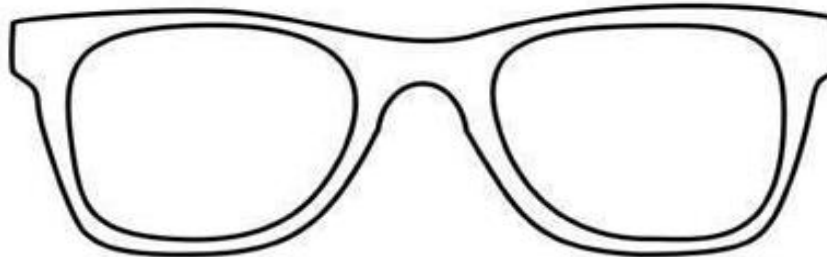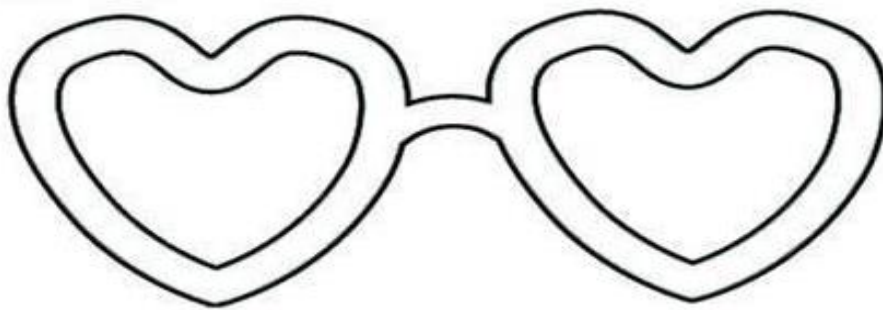
Try LUVE Out

Rewrite each of the staff responses below to be a more LUVEing response.

Youth: *I am so mad at myself, I lost my $20 bill!*

Adult: *You're always losing things. What's up with that?*

Rewrite:

—

Youth: *I get to go to the DC field trip this year! I'm so excited!*

Adult: *Ugh. I wanted to chaperone. I'm so jealous of you.*

Rewrite:

—

Youth: *I feel so alone. Alex is my only friend in this program.*

Adult: *Well, at least you have one friend!*

Rewrite:

—

Youth: *I am really afraid for my basketball try-out tomorrow. I haven't been able to sleep!*

Adult: *Everyone gets on the team, so don't even worry!*

Rewrite:

—

Youth: *I cannot BELIEVE I have to dissect a pig in class tomorrow! That is so gross!*

Adult: *Oh, it'll be just fine. You'll survive.*

Rewrite:

Share the LUVE: Emotion Coaching Role-Play Scenarios

1. The young person is very upset that someone called her "the b-word" during school today. They are sulking in the corner of the room and snapping at anyone who is asking them why they're sitting by themselves.

2. The young person is extremely worried about telling their grandma that they failed the Algebra test. They are having a hard time focusing on their homework and are very antsy.

3. The young person won the school's talent show last night, and they are singing and dancing loudly wherever they go, while boasting about the big win.

4. The young person was making a cake in cooking club, but the cake didn't rise, and it ended up tasting very bitter. The young person looks to be on the verge of tears as everyone else enjoys the cakes they made.

Reflection Questions

1. A key learning I want to remember from the "What's Our Lens?" activity is:

2. One aspect of emotion coaching and/or the LUVE model that resonates with me is:

3. A commitment I am making to myself as a result of what I've learned today is:
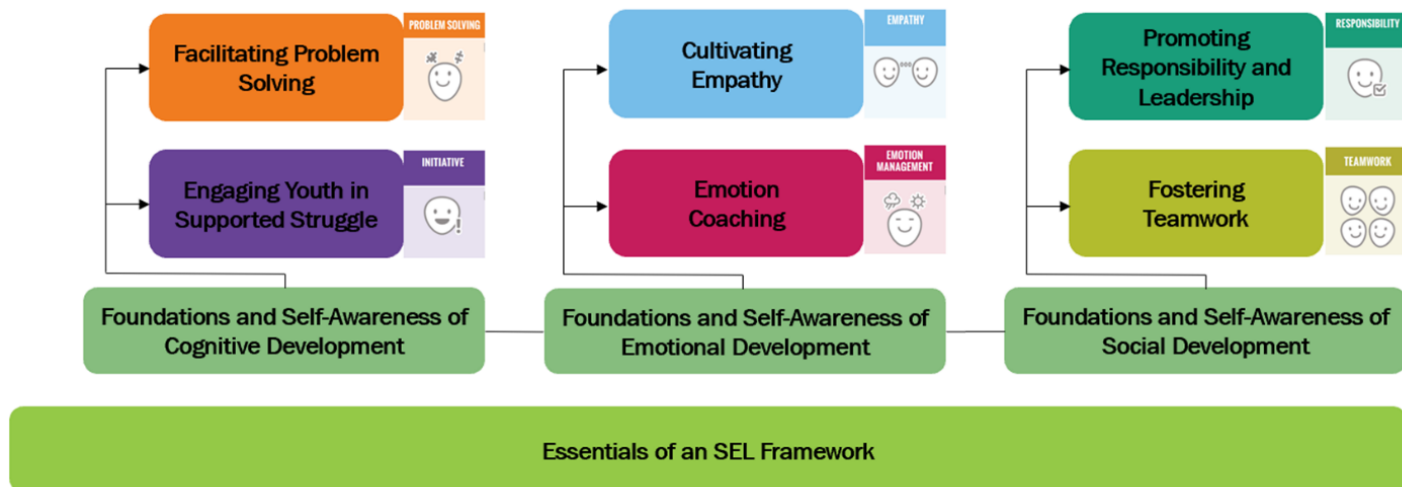
Taking it Back

Key Youth Experiences	How is this already supported?	What do we need to develop this more?
Youth experience a range of positive and challenging emotions in a safe context.		
Youth practice and develop healthy and functional emotion skills.		
Staff Practices	**How are we already doing this?**	**What do we need to grow this practice?**
Staff create and adjust the structure of daily activities to accommodate youth's processing of emotions.		
Staff model healthy strategies for dealing with emotion within the context of caring, mutually-respectful relationships with youth		
Staff provide coaching to youth about handling and learning from their ongoing emotional experiences.		

Emotion Management/Emotion Coaching Goal Form

Staff Practice:

Goal:

Action Step *What needs to be done?*	Person Responsible *Who should take action to complete this step?*	Deadline *When should this step be completed?*	Necessary Resources *What do you need in order to complete this step?*	Potential Challenges *Are there potential challenges that may impede completion? How will you overcome them?*	Result *Was this step successfully completed? Were any new steps identified in the process?*

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

Social Emotional Learning Pyramid of Program Quality
with SEL PQA Scales

Crosswalk of Weikart Center's SEL Resources and Supports

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
			Guide discovery
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
			Provide opportunities to present
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
Management Safe Space (Curriculum Feature)	Reframing Conflict	Emotion Coaching	**Emotion Coaching**
			Acknowledge emotions
			Support young people to name emotions
			Discuss constructive handling
			Discuss emotion causes
Responsibility	Active Learning, Intro to Active Participatory Approach	Engaging Youth in Supported Struggle	**Scaffolding Learning**
			Break task into steps
			Model skills
			Encourage young people to improve performance
			Monitor challenge level
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
Safe Space (Curriculum Features)			**Creating Safe Spaces**
	Building Community, Reframing Conflict	Fostering Teamwork	Foster positive emotional climate
	Building Community,	Fostering Teamwork Cultivating Empathy	Convey warmth and respect
			Provide support for safe space
	Structure & Clear Limits Reframing Conflict		Demonstrate positive group management style
			Demonstrate mutual accountability
	Building Community	Cultivating Empathy	Show active inclusion

SEL PQA Item Reflection

Below is a list of items with their level 5 indicator from the Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA) that are related to Emotion Coaching in program spaces. Use the space below each to reflect on how this was demonstrated during today's workshop and how you can adapt what you experienced today to promote these practices in your own setting.

Safe Space – Creating Safe Spaces: Staff provide a safe and welcome environment

- Staff group management style is characterized by proactive or positive approaches (e.g., proactively promoting constructive engagement, calm redirection, structured attention getters, showing understanding of possible emotional or physical triggers of individuals in the group, etc.).

Supportive Environment – Emotion Coaching: Staff prompt young people to be aware of and constructively handle their emotions

- Staff consistently acknowledge, validate, and name emotions of young people (e.g., "It seems you are disappointed that you didn't get the part.").

- Staff ask all young people to name or describe their emotions or identify the intensity of their emotions (e.g., "So everyone tell us how you felt after the art fair?").

- More than once, staff ask young people about or to discuss constructive handling of their emotions (e.g., staff support young people to distinguish between feelings and actions, talk about ways to calm oneself or to express pride in an accomplishment without putting others down, etc.).

- Staff ask young people about the causes of their emotions (e.g., "Why were you so angry?" "What happened that made you feel that way?").

A free digital download of the SEL PQA is available at www.cypq.org/downloadpqa