PERMISSION TO FEEL
Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help our Kids, Ourselves, and our Society Thrive

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How are you feeling?

ENERGY

PLEASANTNESS

How Educators Felt in 2018

N = 6000 Educators from around the USA

How Educators Feel Right Now

N = 5000 Webinar Participants
March 23-24

Causes of Teachers’ Anxiety

• Fear of getting sick (either themselves or loved ones/family members)
• Having to work from home/child care
• "Online school started today. My vision of finally having someone else take care of kids (even virtually) was smashed to smithereens. This requires 100% parent involvement, actually 200% because the girls are in different grades!!!"
• A quality education for all students
• Being home and cooped up
• Feeling isolated and lonely
• Economy and finances
• Access to food and resources
Educators (most of us) are spending upwards of 90% of the day in the RED & BLUE. While the goal CANNOT be to be in the YELLOW or GREEN all of the time, especially now, we need greater balance!

Out of Balance

- stressed
- frustrated
- anxious
- overworked
- exhilarated
- happy
- joyful

- bored
- tired
- exhausted
- lonely
- satisfied

We’re Not Regulating Very Well!

- Screaming
- Wine, wine, wine!
- Over-eating
- Avoidance
- Over-thinking; ruminating
- Watching trash TV
- Losing my temper
- Oversleeping
- Obsessive Cleaning
- Consuming too much social media

Ideas for what can make a difference

- Learn the science of emotion and emotional intelligence
- Understand that SEL skills are hard, not “soft” skills
- Move beyond the goal that “happiness” is the “answer”
- Focus more on prevention so there is less need for intervention
- Have greater balance in the “core” curriculum
- Educate families in SEL
- Eliminate “quick fix” mentality and focus on systemic change
- Overhaul outdated and often harmful policies and educate policymakers

Our Vision

To use the power of emotions to create a healthier and more equitable, innovative, and compassionate society

Social and Emotional Learning

Moving from a piecemeal approach...

...to a systemic approach

The RULER Approach
Emotions Matter

• Attention, memory, and learning
• Decision making
• Relationship quality
• Physical and mental health
• Performance and creativity

Emotion Scientist vs. Emotion Judge

An Emotion Scientist...
• Accepts all emotions as information
• Sees emotions as ephemeral
• Is open, curious, and reflective
• Is in learner mode (investigates)
• Wants to get “granular”
• Has a “growth mindset”

An Emotion Judge...
• Views emotions as “error” and weak
• Sees emotions as “permanent”
• Is critical, closed, and ignores emotion
• Is in knower mode (makes attributions)
• Clumps emotions as good or bad
• Has a “fixed mindset”

The RULER Skills

R - Recognizing emotions in self and others
U - Understanding causes and consequences of emotions
L - Labeling emotions accurately
E - Expressing emotions
R - Regulating emotions effectively

Healthy Emotion Regulation

The “thoughts” and “actions” we use to
prevent, reduce, initiate, maintain, or
enhance emotions in order to promote
well-being, build positive relationships,
make sound decisions, and attain goals

Managing Anxiety & Stress

• Stress
  • Unpredictable, Uncontrollable, Sustained (like now how we feel right now)
  • Currently, our educators and many of us feel chronic stress.
• Chronic stress – makes us sense danger around the clock. Coupled with
  “resource depletion” – poor nutrition, sleep, and exercise, our worst selves come out and we
  behave irrationally.
  • Spraying people, gargling with Clorox, panic buying of toilet paper
  • Saying mean or hurtful things to our partners
  • Catastrophic thinking. Our brains lie to us. When we don’t have accurate
    information, we make things up (e.g., Turbulence & plane crashes)

The Big 7: Healthy Emotion Regulation

PHYSIOLOGICAL REGULATION
• Mindful breathing

SELF-CARE
• Sleep, nutrition, exercise (Build a strong
  immune system)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
• Feeling safe, heard, & connected

MANAGING YOUR THOUGHTS
• Positive self-talk, gratitude, compassion,
  reappraisal, & problem-solving

MANAGING YOUR LIFE SMARTLY
• Modifying & selecting situations to
  prevent stress, having routines and
  setting daily goals

DOING MEANINGFUL THINGS YOU ENJOY
• Spirituality, hobbies, entertainment, &
  taking a walk in nature

FORGIVENESS
• Giving ourselves permission to fail &
  forgive.
Emotion Regulation Strategies are:

- Specific to the emotion: Not all emotions are created equal.
- Specific to the person: Strategies are rooted in personality, family background, culture.
- Specific to the situation or relationship: Do you regulate better at work than at home? Is it easier with some friends than others? For educators: Are all strategies allowed/permitted?
- And, importantly, there is no criterion of correctness.

Let’s Put It All Together!

- Give yourself & others the permission to feel all emotions.
- Emotion regulation isn’t about not feeling, it’s about accepting all feelings & using them wisely.
- Strive to become an emotion scientist, not an emotion judge.
- Remember: Physical distance does not mean psychological distance.
- Appreciate that developing emotion regulation skills can be harder than learning traditional “hard” skills. It’s life’s work. Embrace the complexity!
- Be the role model. If you fail, be open to apologizing, forgiving, and repairing – and seeking professional help if necessary.
- Don’t give up! Your health and your children’s health depend on it.

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Between stimulus and response there is space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

- Viktor Frankl

THANK YOU!