

THE A.R.T. OF DEVELOPING EQ FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

1. AWARENESS

The foundation of all Emotional Intelligence is Self-Awareness. Building this in students is the first step in empowering them to make more effective decisions and handle life's challenges on their own.

A. Questions to develop Self-Awareness:

- i. What's most important to you about this issue?
- ii. When (issue) happened/happens, what is the first thought you have about yourself?
- iii. Tell me about other times you've had this thought about yourself.
- iv. What feeling do you have when you think this?

B. Further explanations for the counselor

- i. It is not necessary to use ALL the questions ALL the time. Your time is limited with each student and the issues they bring are varied in complexity. Use your professional judgment about which questions to use/not use or where and when to close the session.
- ii. These are thought-provoking questions, therefore, expect long silences.
- iii. Do not accept superficial responses to the first question. Drill down...with their first response, especially if it's quick, begin using this follow-up: What's important to you about that? Until you get to a response that you BELIEVE is the bottom line.
- iv. Simplify the myriad of feelings by using this: glad, mad, sad, scared.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

A. In order to empower students, we also need to help them become aware of their responsibility in their challenges. These questions promote acceptance of responsibility:

- i. When you feel this way, how do you typically respond?
- ii. An alternate question or additional question may be: When you felt this, how did you respond?

- iii. What goals do you have for the resolution of this challenge?
- iv. Did this reaction help you to achieve your goals?
- v. What other choices did you/do you have?

B. Further explanations for the counselor

- i. Your goal with this section of questions is to help the student identify behaviors and actions that may contribute to their challenges.
- ii. Again, do not allow them to stop at superficial answers.
- iii. Depending on age and level of maturity, you may need to give them 'homework' in this area: ask them to pay attention to their behaviors when they have this feeling; ask them to talk with a trusted adult about other choices that person makes when they feel that way.

3. TAKE-AWAY

This is the part where you recap and have the student identify a new way to deal with the challenge.

A. Questions

- i. Of the other choices we identified, which ones will help you reach your goal/s?
- ii. Which one are you willing to try?
- iii. What other insights came to you as we talked?
- iv. What are you going to take away from today to try out?

B. Further explanations for the counselor

- i. Help the student shape the way they are going to 'try out' the new behavior.
- ii. Ask them to let you know how it works. This can be through another visit, text, e-mail, etc. And doesn't have to be a lengthy conversation. Often, I heard from the student again when they were in another challenging situation.
- iii. Pay attention to the growth of the students with whom you use this technique. I began to notice students coming in with the first set of questions already answered and presented to me as they filled me in on the challenge. They were beginning to use this on their own!