

# Introduction and structural overview

Welcome to *Talking is for All*, which is the second edition of the *Talking is...* trilogy and is a work in its own right.

## Changes and additions in this edition

Updated research citations and the most recent references at the time of writing are within this second edition. I have expanded the teens' section to include teenagers up to 19 years. A new format dealing with research, theory, how to use the resources and a new section on resilience, substantially improves this edition when compared to the first one. A section listing useful resources is included after the references and an index for making navigation within the book simpler for readers, is added.

Prefaces or Forewords to previous editions are merged and expanded into a single preface for this one. After the Introduction, there is a section on Emotional Literacy, bringing together in one volume, research and theory on the topic. Worksheets show how to put it into practice. Emotional intelligence, which depends on emotional literacy, is part of seven multiple intelligences, that the psychologist Dr. Howard Gardner (1993) thought of.

- 1 Linguistic (relating to words and languages)
- 2 Logical-Mathematical (relating to logic and arithmetic)
- 3 Musical (relating to sounds and rhythm)
- 4 Bodily-Kinesthetic (relating to controlling the movement of the body)
- 5 Spatial-Visual (relating to space and images)
- 6 Intarerpersional (relating to the emotions of others)
- 7 Intrapersonal (relating to self-awareness)

The term Emotional Intelligence is part of Interpersonal Intelligence which was expanded on from Howard Gardner's 'interpersonal' concept, by academics Mayer and Salovey (1993).

## *Talking is for All's* structure

This edition is divided into three main parts. Firstly, four to seven year olds are dealt with, secondly, there is a part focusing on eight to twelves, and finally, is the part which relates to the teenage years.

## Features

Features include age-related stories, and exercises in the form of activities and worksheets.

## Outline

The above features are within the book's outline of three main sections which embrace the following nine facets (though not necessarily in the same order).

- 1 Emotional literacy
- 2 Why emotional literacy is good
- 3 Who says what about emotions
- 4 New research
- 5 How to use the worksheets
- 6 Stories, activities and worksheets
- 7 Plans for using the stories
- 8 Worksheets
- 9 Resilience

There are more interactive ideas in this book than in the three first editions. Some of these are dramatic – incorporating music, movement, art and drama as ways to develop emotional literacy across the curriculum. I think this is exciting. Just as in the first editions, the book is very accessible and easy to use.

# Emotional literacy overview

Emotional literacy is the ebb and flow of emotions linking thoughts and actions. The more emotionally literate people are, the higher their emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence can be raised by teaching the five pillars of emotional literacy (Goleman, 1996 and Gottman, 1998):

- 1 Understand emotions in-the-moment. This is basic for self-knowledge and insight. The reason is that individuals who know their emotions are better at designing their journey through life, since they have a more certain sense of themselves, whom they like to be with and how they would like to spend their time.
- 2 Deal appropriately with emotions as they arise, such as shaking off irritability and gloom. This is fundamental for self-care. Individuals who are inept at managing their emotions, experience more distress, while people who are adept at it, bounce back quicker from negative stresses.
- 3 Have self-motivation. This is crucial for controlling emotions and delaying gratification in order to be attentive, creative and become a highly skilled person. Those with this ability tend to be more productive and create an effective impact with regard to anything they do.
- 4 Recognise emotions that others feel. For altruism and empathy fuelled by compassion, this is another basic principle. It is the individuals who have empathy that are the ones more likely to be in-tune with what others want and need.
- 5 Cope successfully with relationships. Being able to handle relationships is crucial because it involves coping with others' emotions; this is underpinned by qualities of effectiveness, popularity and leadership. Individuals who cope well with interpersonal relationships outshine others, than those who do not, when interacting.

## Aspects of emotional literacy

Key aspects of emotional literacy include affect (emotion), behaviour (action) and cognition (thought) (Mortimer, 1998). Effective programmes include all these (Grant, 1992):

### Affect

- Identify and name emotions
- Express emotions
- Assess level of emotions

- Manage emotions
- Delay gratification
- Control impulses
- Reduce stress
- Know that behaviour is not the same as emotion

## Behaviour

- Verbal such as asking clearly for what one wants, reacting adequately to being criticised, standing up for oneself, being altruistic, listening non-judgementally to others and being involved in a positive peer group.
- Non-verbal having the skills to communicate effectively through body-language, gesturing, facial expression and eye contact.

## Cognition

- Talking to oneself as a way of coping
- Being aware of one's environment and seeing oneself as part of that environment
- Having the skills to problem-solve such as finding alternative perspectives and anticipating outcomes
- Understanding others' viewpoints
- Knowing what behaviour is proper and what is not
- Being positive
- Becoming more aware of oneself

## Empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard

The foundation within which an emotional literacy programme must be based is the communication, from teacher or therapist to youngster, of empathy (compassion), congruence (honesty) and unconditional positive regard (warm acceptance). There is cumulative research-based and clinical evidence showing that these three qualities are necessary for movement in a positive direction (Rogers, 1951; Rogers, 1961, Kirscherbaum and Henderson, 1989; Howe, 1993, Bayne et al, 1994 and Goleman, 2004).

## Characteristics of emotionally literate individuals

Writers such as Apter (1997), Baker (1997), Goleman (1995), Gottman (1998), Rudd (1998 and 2001) and Schilling (1999) suggest that, emotionally literate people (when compared to those who are not) tend to show the following characteristics

- More confident
- Mentally healthier
- Less susceptible to ill health
- Quicker to recover from illness
- Skilled at coping with their emotions
- Able to recognise others' emotions
- Able to respond appropriately to others' emotions
- Happier
- More successful in relationships
- More successful in their careers
- Able to say 'No' to inappropriate situations
- Open to being educated
- Able to handle stress
- Able to resolve conflicts
- Good communicators
- Resilient in their self-esteem
- Aware of the environment
- Supportive of others in distress
- Good at communicating
- Able to understand another's point of view
- Have leadership qualities

These qualities are coupled with confidence which shows behaviourally, while positively impacting on cognitive processes; for example, they think more clearly and speak up for themselves (Seligman, 2005). They are less likely to bully or to bully others (Gerhardt, 2004).

## Vital role of class teacher

Teachers are in the favourable position of being able to make a special connection with their pupils, for facilitating emotional literacy, while linking valid theory with good teaching practice. Although there is an increasing body of literature supporting the premise that a positive mental attitude improves physical well-being, what is also needed is an overall and widely available practical framework, empirically based, which guides teachers in facilitating the improvement of emotional health in every pupil. A programme of emotional literacy within the school curriculum can give teachers a tool for working towards better class management while fostering positive behaviour in their pupils. (Such a programme is contained in the stories, activities and worksheets of this volume.)

Teachers may be the first to spot that a youngster is going through change, perhaps by noticing a behavioural difference. Relevant issues can be addressed during Circle Time so that youngsters are legitimately supported by others (Bliss et al, 1995). Fortunately, it is relatively easy for a network of peer support to be facilitated by teachers for their pupils. For example, each child or teenager

could have a pupil who may be the same age or chronologically older, as a stress-buster-buddy to share emotions and concerns, mainly through talking. At the heart of such a relationship, it is vital to acknowledge the distress experienced (which can manifest physically) and give unconditional love (Batmanghelidjh, 2007).

## Emotional and physical are enmeshed

Cumulative evidence shows that mental and physical aspects within people are entwined (Goleman, 1996; Grant, 1992; Baker, 1998 and Rudd, 2003). People without a supportive social network, who feel anxious and unhappy, are four times more likely to die significantly younger than those who have a social support network, a positive attitude and are emotionally literate (Baker, 1998). It is therefore considered paramount that teachers foster emotional literacy in their pupils as soon as they start school, until they leave. The most effective way of being psychologically healthy, is to be more expressive and aware of oneself. Being expressive helps with feeling good about oneself. (Baker, 1998; Gottman, 1998; Seligman, 2005; Gerdhardt, 2007 and Batmanghelidjh, 2007).

Feeling good and being healthy are linked to high self-esteem. If self-esteem is low, then more time is spent putting other peoples' wishes first, so there is little time and energy left to plan for health enhancing activities such as nutritious eating and an exercise programme. In such circumstances, it is easy to lose sight of one's individual needs and undermine one's health, while self-esteem plummets. The amount of self awareness one has, the level of compassion one experiences, the level of self-control, the ability to manage anger, make decisions and listen, determines ones strength in emotional literacy.

## Psychoneuroimmunology

Psychoneuroimmunology: the investigation of the links between the mind, the immune and nervous systems, is increasingly showing the interactions between these areas and it is unrealistic to separate the mind from the body (Chopra, 1993 and Gerhardt, 2007). A short stressor such as giving a speech or showing a piece of work to classmates may increase immunity, long term stress such as being bullied or the break up of a relationship, can have a detrimental effect on health (Baker, 1998). This is because the amount of stress hormones (for example, cortisol) being released over a long period of time, suppress the immune system and interfere with the body's ability to protect against infection and cancer. The antidote to such stress is relaxation and being happy.

## Tears and laughter

Laughter and tears can help prevent illness. This is because tears release stress-chemicals which have previously accumulated during a stressful time, and laughter reduces the levels of stress hormones such as cortisol while boosting an immunity

antibody called immunoglobulin-A (Gottman, 1998; Seligman, 2005 and Gerdhardt, 2007). Those who engage in on-going cultural activities such as going to the theatre, writing, dancing or visiting art galleries, tend to live longer than people who rarely do these types of activities (Baker, 1998). It is not difficult to instil a love for these activities in youngsters if their teachers enjoy them.

### The emotional mind

Educational writer, Schilling (1996), explains that the amygdala within the brain is the centre of the emotional mind and that all information entering the brain is analysed via the amygdala for emotional value before going to the cerebral cortex for processing. 'Data leaving the amygdala carry an emotional charge, which, if sufficiently powerful, can override reasoned thinking and logic' (p. 4). She then describes the work of the neo-cortex.

### Brain, logic and emotion

'The critical networks on which emotion and feeling rely include not only the limbic system (amygdala), but also the neocortex – specifically the prefrontal lobe ... This part of the emotional brain is able to control feelings in order to reappraise situations and deal with them more effectively. It functions like the control room for planning and organising actions toward a goal. When an emotion triggers, within moments the prefrontal lobes analyse possible actions and choose the best alternative' (p. 5). These activities take place in the brain, but are not usually within awareness. Although the rational part of one's mind makes logical connections, the emotional part of the mind takes its beliefs to be absolutely true (Gottman, 1998). That is why it may appear futile when attempting to reason with a person who is emotionally distraught.

### Sleep and arousal

The 'template' with which humans are born requires language and emotional instincts. Emotional instincts are so strong that if instinctive emotional reactions are inhibited daily, the need for emotional expression does not go away because one is in the cycle of emotional arousal. Griffin's (2001) research, as a psychologist, shows that an opportunity is therefore sought to complete the cycle of emotional arousal by rapid eye movement during the REM sleep phase.

He offers an explanation that links IQ level with emotion: the more emotionally aroused one is, the more IQ drops. Griffin explains that the amygdala stores and possesses the human survival templates as well as storing negative emotions. The thalamus puts the patterns of emotions together and flashes this information to the amygdala. Next, the amygdala gives emotional feeling to the information coming into it and therefore, emotions precede thoughts because emotion is present before it reaches the neo-cortex. His conclusion is that emotion triggers thought.

This view shows that if we are locked in a frame of reference that is distressing, we need to calm down and show a more effective way of connecting to reality. Griffin draws upon the role of imagination in the generation of desired goals and in solving psychological problems. It therefore follows that if we access our imagination we can imagine our future, plan and be creative. In emotional disorders the imagination is abused, so depressed individuals have negative fantasies, not positive ones. Anger is linked to depression, imagining violating the self and or other(s).

## Anger

Inappropriately dealt with emotions, particularly anger, can have devastating effects – a research team offered a crucial piece of information regarding people with stress-related illnesses such as heart disease (Rudd, 2005a). Members of the team asked participants what specific personality characteristic causes illness? Each one of the researchers discovered identical answers: anger. This backs up the work of Chopra (1993) who also found that emotional attitude is connected to health related problems such as heart attacks. Chopra's investigations highlight that bottled-up anger, being depressed, stressed and emotionally reserved, are all associated with heart disease.

## Decrease disruptive behaviour

Therefore, for improved emotional literacy, those who are behaviourally challenged can decrease their disruptive behaviour by learning anger management (Rudd, 2005a). For instance, one anger management technique is to put yourself in the other person's shoes as well as being aware of how you are emotionally and physically. Young people, as long as they are old enough to talk, can be guided in doing this within role-play situations. Intriguingly, in a three-year follow-up investigation, group members who trained in anger management reduced their drug and alcohol consumption while self-esteem increased (Rudd, 2005a).

## Tolerate differences

What is imperative is the ability to tolerate differences in others while accepting them as they are. It is also helpful if individuals know their patterns of dealing with anger. Such knowledge may help them in being open to understanding that they have a variety of choices regarding how to cope with it (Rudd, 2005a). Inappropriately managed anger produces negative stress (Rudd, 2005b). Young people do not want negative stress, they want love. Research backs this up (McGrellis et al, 1998).

## What young people hope

Reciprocal love is linked to emotional health. Research conducted by psychologist McGrellis and his team, spotlights that reciprocal love and



material security are what young people hope for. They fear loneliness, illness, unemployment and homelessness. McGrellis and his team are not the only ones who have conducted research among school-aged individuals resulting in findings that these hopes and fears are common for young people in Britain (Swallow and Romick, 1998). Psychologists Swallow and Romick's research findings also reveal that young people need a sense of control about their future. Other research shows that youngsters feel insecure due to a sense of vulnerability and uncertainty (Nilson, 1998). Developing emotional literacy can help such youngsters gain a sense of control.

### Lack of education

If a fraction of the money spent on treating physical illnesses was directed into emotional literacy education, a massive amount of suffering and of the UK's wealth could be saved. The cost of common mental disorders in England is at least £6 billion a year. Two-thirds of the British work-force is off work at some time, mainly due to anxiety or depression, of whom only ten per cent are referred to a specialist, as the capacity to cater for the other ninety per cent is not available. A great intervention move is needed to help individuals from undue suffering. (Brown, 1998.) Teachers can be key in implementing such a move.

Psychologist Martin (1998) offers a convincing argument for a new kind of relationship between youngster and school – one which is based on valuing good inter-personal relationships, so that a youngster does not experience school as a mainly lonely place. A curriculum embracing emotional literacy can achieve such a relationship. Meanwhile, psychologists Makin and Ruitenbeck (1998) state the importance of being in touch with your own psyche and to be active in promoting your health in order to be a good enough role model for the youngsters as they develop.

### What schools can do

Since a young person spends many hours a day at school, there is much that can be done which can help towards re-dressing a possible shaky start to life, in terms of emotional wellness. For instance, a youngster may start school with low self-esteem due to perhaps an initial insecure attachment bond with the parent or primary care-giver; but school can become a stabilising factor in a child's life and if an adequate emotional literacy curriculum is followed throughout the early school years, by the time a child is between the ages of eight and twelve, it is not unusual to see some improvement in a desired direction in that child's emotional well being coupled with a rise in self-esteem and a marked improvement by age 18 (Perry, 2006). Many find their schooling difficult and some become disaffected with schools. Dealing with emotions is important for pupils not only because academic learning tends to become more enjoyable but because those with youngsters in their care will find that their job is easier when they have a group of emotionally literate youngsters (Rae, 2000).

## Reduced mental suffering

If individuals were more emotionally literate, then the mental suffering, which has reached such large proportions in the UK, could be greatly reduced. Teachers are in an ideal position to teach emotional literacy, not only by talking but by ensuring communication. The way we communicate with youngsters profoundly influences their emotional development and way of relating. Communicate with awareness (Douglas, 2007). This psychological approach can create a learning environment that encourages and supports good behaviour (James and Brownsword, 1994).

## Perspectives on emotional literacy

Emotional literacy is a controversial area and not all have been in favour of it; for example, according to Berne (1964), the creator of Transactional Analysis, people are better off thinking than feeling. However, his view was speculative, as opposed to being based on research. Steiner (1996), an old teacher of mine and a student of Berne who eventually worked with him, developed the view that being intelligent with emotions was wholesome. Steiner draws upon the research of others to argue his point, 'The possibility of monitoring minute facial muscle movements, respiration, perspiration, heart rate, brain activity, and other correlates of emotion has resulted in a great deal of research being reported ... Still ... emotional research in the *American Psychologist* offer little usable information' (National Advisory Mental Health Council, 1995, p. 32).

Shortly before Steiner's publication, Goleman (1995) offered a rational argument for emotional intelligence, saying that EQ was important because it relates to health, family life, work, emotional wellness and how well one does in life. So, although not all psychologists took the significance of emotions on board (Berne, 1970), others encompassed the importance of emotion in their work (Cassius, 1973; Jacobs, 1973; James, 1981 and Rudd, 2003). Psychologist Seligman (2005) also spotlights the importance of emotion, focusing on the good effects of positive emotions.

## Psychologists share research findings

Psychologists Griffin and Tyrrell (2001) share findings, from research conducted at Delaware University, that emotional knowledge is a predictor of social behaviour and academic competence in youngsters at risk. Evidence from this research shows that young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds but who can read the emotional facial expressions of other people, are more likely to integrate socially and be academically successful when compared to those from disadvantaged homes who cannot understand the facial expressions of emotions other people experience.

## **IQ and EQ**

Traditionally, rational skills are measured by IQ tests and tend to be prioritized within the state educational system. EQ, however, is at least as important. A reason for this is that both rational and emotional skills are inter-linked within overall human intelligence. If rational intelligence is better with higher emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence benefits from the rational mind, then the two forms of intelligence work best together and are interdependent (Schilling, 1999).

## **Games**

As psychotherapists, psychologists, counsellors and/or educators, we have a responsibility to facilitate developing emotional literacy within the young people in our care. What seems most important is that we do it. Perhaps not so important, is how we do it. One way of doing it, apart from using this book, is to utilize games that facilitate raising EQ (Rudd, 2002).

Games that foster emotional literacy can have positive outcomes. From personal experience, I know these types of self-disclosing activities have benefits such as learning to listen with quality attention (which creates rapport), to collaborate (which brings about interaction), to have fun (which has the benefit of boosting the immune system), to discover something new about self and others (which keeps the brain healthily active), to deepen relationships (which facilitates a sense of love), to be a member of a co-operative group (which enables a feeling of belonging) and to be positively interactive (which aids communication skills).

## **Government's influence**

Whatever programme of literacies or intelligences schools propagate, is partly dependent on government. During the Thatcher era in Britain, the more pupils schools had, the more money the government gave them. Success was measured by the school's league tables (Sassoon, 2001). Consequently, youngsters with emotional and behavioural disorder (EBD) were not welcomed in schools, since the time and attention they needed, could be offered to more young people without EBD. There was less time available in schools for developing emotional literacy, since the time was needed to focus on numeracy and literacy for the league tables. Due to this, the number of young people permanently excluded from schools rose by approximately 10,000 between 1990/1 and 1996/7, from 2,910 to 12,700 (Rasmussen, 2001).

At the time of writing, the British government directed schools to work closely with parents of youngsters at risk of expulsion, by having a pastoral system. Due to this plan, the number of young people who have been expelled from schools has fallen from 12,700 to 8,600 within four years. Nevertheless, the UK National Curriculum has its limitations and although Citizenship sessions

have been compulsory in secondary schools since September 2002, it is not easy for primary schools to find time, in an apparently overcrowded curriculum, for nurturing children's personal, social and health education (PSHE); although there is an aspiration for regular Circle Time sessions where children can specifically work on increasing their emotional literacy.

## Support

To achieve a generation of emotionally literate youngsters, support is needed from parents and government initiatives. I have had the privilege to supervise several psychologists who work for UK's A Place to Be. This initiative is run as a charity that focuses on primary schools. A therapist with an educational background works with youngsters who suffer from emotional problems identified by the school. The service is only available in some schools and only those whose needs are perceived as the greatest are offered support, due to restriction in funds. It seems likely that every school can benefit from a similar initiative and other like-minded projects. For example, parenting classes, an outreach staff member who can investigate why a young person has started to truant, specialist teachers in art, music, dance and drama (especially for those who underachieve), the supply of nutritional meals and counselling services. However, unless resources such as finances are made available, youngsters can lose out by not fulfilling their potential for using their emotions intelligently. 'Emotional intelligence' is almost a household term, this has not always been the case.

## Reviewing emotional literacy

Two relatively unknown academic psychologists, Mayer and Salovey (1993), had a paper published in an obscure professional journal, which was less than ten pages long, called 'The Intelligence of Emotional Intelligence'. Less than a decade later, a plethora of literature accumulated, mostly speculative, stemming from their work.

## Emotional intelligence

Two years after Mayer and Salovey's paper, Goleman (1995) published 'Emotional Intelligence', declaring that the times we live in now are in need of compassion and self-restraint. He showed that neurological information implies that there is an opportunity for changing the emotional habits. Goleman does this by explaining that we are born with the neurological tools for experiencing emotion. Therefore, we may learn to control emotion, be empathic and cope with relationships. The way we handle emotion is key in either maintaining treasured relationships or ruining them. It is also key to our well being and how we cope.

## The brain's plasticity

As early as 1975, Goleman persuasively argued that our emotional heritage is the basis of temperament, but that temperament is not destiny, since our brain chemistry has remarkable plasticity. The way we learn how to cope with

emotions as a child, lays the path for how inept or adept we become in handling emotions as an adult. The critical periods for putting down the critical emotional habits that will rule our lives are during the developmental years. These habits, however, can be modified later in life.

Over 20 years after Goleman's publication, Steiner (1997) declared the same sentiment, using different phraseology. In the same vein, Schilling (1999) and Weisinger (1998) state in their writings that during a young person's development it is necessary to address emotional literacy. Gerhardt (2004) and Batmanghelidj (2007) also write similarly, although Gerhardt bases her work on scientific research while Batmanghelidj bases hers on evidence from her work as a child psychotherapist. With people who have such authority all agreeing with one another, it seems obvious that it can never be too late to improve emotional literacy, or too early to facilitate it.

### **Born emotional**

We are born emotional beings. Ancient Greeks knew this. Early Greek philosopher Aristotle declared, 'The greatest thing by far is to have a command of emotion'. In the 21st century, psychologist Mair (2001) stated that emotions are more crucial than thinking. He stipulates that feelings are important in therapy work. Similarly, I declare that they are important for teaching and other work which involves adult to teenager and or child interaction.

### **Value emotions**

Mair values emotions and does not want them ignored. Likewise, Griffin (2001) says that we need to pay attention to emotions. He explains how one can be eloquent in speech yet emotionally locked up. Young people need to learn to express feelings in words because if they do not learn this skill it is much harder to keep adult relationships healthy. There is pressure on youngsters to survive academically yet what is also needed for them is emotional support to develop emotional literacy.

### **In Britain**

According to the Chief Executive of the British Mental Health Foundation, Ruth Lesirge, at least one in five children in Britain suffer from psychological problems (Lesirge, 2001a/b). Although literacy and numeracy are important, if youngsters could also be taught social skills and how to effectively deal with emotions, then there could be less mental distress later in their lives. Lesirge investigates the impact of certain types of support in schools where there are young people who are behaviourally challenging, have depression and experience isolation (2001a/b). The types of support embrace Circle Time, Friends Circles (other children volunteer to be special friends to a child who is either isolated or withdrawn), parents room, parenting skills programme and training workshops for all staff (whether a lunch supervisor or a teacher).

These projects were based in certain mainstream schools in the UK (such as in Doncaster, Guildford, Coventry and Sheffield) and the outcomes show that they are effective with youngsters for promoting their confidence, self-esteem and positive mental health.

### Involve parents

Such news is heart-warming. However, educational consultant with Schools Support Services in Britain, Sassoon (2001), claims that schools alone cannot help develop youngsters' emotional literacy. His view is that parents, too, should be involved.

### Perpetrators are also victims

Sassoon is not the first to declare that perpetrators are also victims. Morrison (1997) offers a convincing argument that young perpetrators are also victims, exemplified by his graphical description of the home circumstances of Jon Venables and Robert Thompson who were convicted of murder.

### Money

If the £130,000 of tax payers money per year spent on Venables and Thompson for their care and education when they were incarcerated, was available (or even just a fraction of it), prior to the Bulger tragedy, to invest into the Venables and Thompson families and the two boys, in order to help them in coping with life, James Bulger would probably be alive now (Sassoon, 2001). It is important to hear what professionals such as Sassoon and Morrison say to other professionals regarding youngsters' well-being.

### Professional audience

For a professional audience, who says what regarding emotional literature in children and teenagers, can be divided into three main areas:

- 1 Professionals journals such as *Young Children* and *Young Exceptional Children* (these offer a combination of the scientific basis offered by researchers on enriching emotional literacy and practical information on how to develop it in young individuals).
- 2 Specific practical information on teaching the young how to identify, understand and express emotions healthily (for example Joseph and Strain, 2003a; Joseph and Strain, 2003b; Kusche and Greenberg, 1994; Shure, 2000; Webster-Stratton, 1990 and Webster-Stratton, 1999).
- 3 Researchers who have had their findings published, with regard to the effects of enhancing emotional literacy in young people (for example Denham and Burton, 1996; Domitrovich et al, 2002; Greenberg and Kursche, 1998; Moore and Beland, 1992 and Webster-Sutton and Hammonds, 1997).

Below are deliberations on the implications of investigations such as these.

## More emotional literacy, less truancy

What we know from researchers such as these is revealing. For instance, there are statistically significant differences between the numbers of young people who truant from schools and the availability of emotional literacy programmes – the main factor is that schools which offer emotional literacy programmes have the least truants and exclusions. This is exemplified by Holland Park School in West London, where Andrea Atkinson heads a project on social inclusion. She works closely with heads of departments, two youth workers, a learning support co-ordinator and two learning support mentors in order to provide a comprehensive support programme; a member of staff from the local social services department is also assigned to work at the school. Due to this strategy, fixed term exclusions at the school dropped by 75 per cent and within two years, permanent exclusions were reduced by 65 per cent (Sassoon, 2001). The amount of stress relieved by emotional literacy programmes is priceless.

## Stress

Ability to develop insight into stressors is important. Emotions, thoughts and beliefs can make stress either negative or positive. If, for instance, a child is told to play hide and seek and that child loves the game, then it is a good stressor; but if the child hates that game, then it is a bad stressor. In order to help youngsters develop stress coping skills, it is essential to develop the ability to manage stress within you, the adult. Stress which creates motivation and creativity is positive stress. Resilience buffers against negative stress while allowing positive stress.

## Resilience

Professional helpers such as psychotherapists and teachers are faced with the needs of others, practically, daily and often for many years; so mental resilience is important. In order to stay psychologically robustly healthy, the following ideas, which have mainly been extrapolated from Baker (1998) and Rudd (2006), can be used as a framework for an antidote to negative stress, so the ability to handle pupils and clients does not impinge on the helpers' psychological wellness. Relax, be happy, use spontaneity, have a positive attitude, do some cultural activities (as some people who live longer than average do, such as going to the theatre, visiting art galleries and writing), eat nutritiously, drink enough water, exercise regularly, keep your own needs in sight, recognise and deal with your own feelings. In sum, take adequate self-care.

## Conclusion

Youngsters need wise and loving caretakers, nutrition, rest and play as they develop. Play to a child is like work to an adult. It is important because a whole plethora of emotions can be safely expressed during play.

Pre-school children need to experience playing with their bodies, such as playing finger games, in order to gain in self-awareness (Brooking-Payne, 1996). Self-awareness is crucial for emotional literacy. The years from four to nineteen (and beyond), are an exciting time of change from a young child to a young adult and boundaries are needed so that youngsters can test their strength against them, while feeling secure and being reassured. Teenagers continue to need acceptance and unconditional love no less than nutritious food and drink since all these types of support are nurturing. Indeed, educational writer Brooking-Payne believes that Circle Time activities (which incorporates emotional literacy education) need to be continued at least up to the age of 21, for the optimum development of young people.

I am moved to declare with my heart and mind that what emerges from emotional development can be extraordinarily and profoundly positive for the individual, society and the world. The younger generation inherits what we have made of the world, those with good emotional intelligence will keep this world, including themselves, OK. If they do not and they are emotionally intelligent, they will feel uncomfortable and so will then do something about it. Further, they will have the ability to be healthier, more well adjusted and happier than if they had not been nurtured to have psychological well being.

You, the adults involved, are invaluable. See the beauty inherent in every young person and relate to them with loving wisdom (such as patience) as you facilitate their emotional literacy. Your non-verbal communication whilst being with them, such as your behaviour, attitude and vocal quality, speaks statistically significantly louder than words (Rudd, 2000). Developing emotional literacy in youngsters is not difficult. Why are you taking young people on this emotional literacy educational journey? Perhaps because it is fundamental that youngsters feel confident and secure within themselves, that they learn to listen to their own needs and be respectful of others, that they learn how to learn, that they are social and healthy not only today but for life.



# How to use the resources

Worksheets and activities in this book are rooted in the theory and research based evidence of experts in the field of emotional literacy (such as Goleman, 2004 and Steiner, 1980). Creative interpersonal and intra-personal activities are combined with learning about emotional wellness, sharing, talking, thinking, feeling and doing.

Teachers can use the resources in a step-by-step way, to teach emotional literacy by planning, implementing, assessing and record-keeping a quality curriculum. Psychological practitioners can integrate appropriate worksheets into whatever therapeutic model they use with a particular child, teenager or group. Worksheets are self explanatory and can also be used to keep youngsters creatively occupied while in a waiting room or whilst following up an activity.

## Adapt suggested activities

Each activity sheet contributes to an emotional literacy programme. The programme is flexible so you can use your own creativity, and the imagination of the children and teenagers. Use the suggested activities as they are or adapt them so that they are tailor-made for your particular child, teenager or group.

## Planning

When planning for your youngster(s), bear in mind the following two points.

- 1 Ensure that the five pillars of the emotional literacy programme or curriculum are covered (know your emotions, manage them, recognise others' emotions, motivate yourself and handle relationships well). This can be done by having the list in front of you and or ticking each one off as you introduce it.
- 2 Ensure that there is a link with parents and carers so they know what is happening. You can do this, for example, by either giving appropriate homework, or via a newsletter. If possible, invite parents and carers to attend a meeting about the emotional literacy curriculum. In this way they will be able to support it.

## Collect evidence

Keep every scrap of evidence to support your emotional literacy programme. At an appropriate time, display all the work and invite an audience so the youngsters can show their personal and combined achievements. When possible, take photographs, film and audio-record individuals and groups while working on emotional literacy. (This requires informed consent from young people, and their parents or carers if the youngsters are not legally adults.) The eventual bank of evidence can be useful for qualitative and quantitative research.

## Record keeping

An age appropriate assessment form is in each of the relevant sections (Parts 1, 2 and 3) which can also be used for record keeping. These forms can easily be adapted to suit your particular situation. Each form takes less than five minutes to administrate. It is suggested that a record of assessment is obtained when you first have your group or youngster, half way through your time with the group or youngster, and when it is time for this group or youngster to move on. Children and teenagers can also record their own achievements while with you. They can do this by implementing their own record keeping.

Worksheets can be used either independently, or as part of a planned course. If you use the worksheets as part of a curriculum on emotional literacy, you may like to consider making a plan of what your aims are, such as, for a session, a week, a month, a term or on a yearly basis and or more.

# Materials and resources

Ensure that all youngsters have access to colouring in equipment.  
Parts 1, 2 and 3 embrace the materials and resources.  
For these sections ensure that all youngsters have access to colouring in equipment.

