

Emotion Literacy

NAFASI | FIU

Emotions are **natural, informative and important** and they can help us learn about ourselves and others.

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PURPOSE

- ▶ Emotions are signals that help us understand the world around us
- ▶ What you **feel** influences what you do. What you do can make situations better or worse

E

EXPERIENCE

- ▶ Emotions exist on a continuum (low to high) and can be complex (more than one at a time). Having insight into **your own** emotions helps you understand your experiences and helps you decide what to do
- ▶ Your body sends you messages about how you feel. For example, strong emotions can be experienced by a racing heart, tight muscles, butterflies in your belly, and sweaty palms

A

AWARENESS

- ▶ People experience and express emotions in different ways
- ▶ Observing emotions in **other people** requires understanding both **verbal** and **nonverbal** cues (e.g., body language and facial expressions) and allows us to better connect with others

C

COMPASSION

- ▶ We never truly know how people are feeling or what they might be going through. Being kind and accepting – especially when people appear sad, worried, or angry – communicates that we care and support them
- ▶ By being patient and understanding, we can improve our perspective-taking; after all, we all feel sad, worried, or angry sometimes

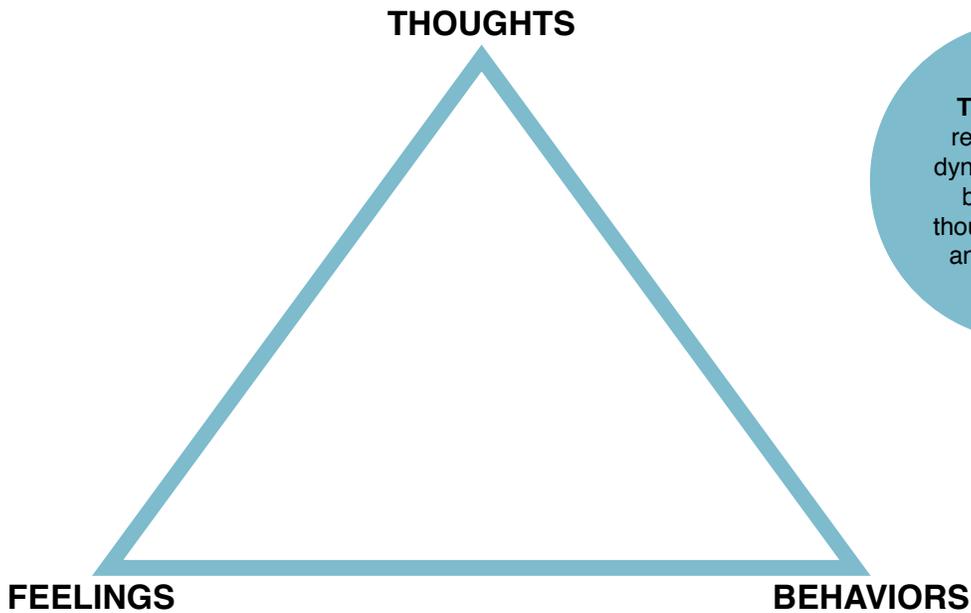
E

EXPRESSION

- ▶ Emotions can look different for people across cultures, contexts and situations
- ▶ Sometimes we hide our emotions making it hard for other people to know what we feel inside
- ▶ We don't want to eliminate the emotion; we want to understand it, label it, know why it's occurring and allow it to motivate us toward a healthy desired outcome

NOTE: Practicing emotion literacy skills during moments of calm prepares us to use these tools when we are upset.

The Cognitive Triangle



This triangle represents the dynamic interplay between our thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

Emotions are tied to what we **feel** in our bodies (physiologically), how we **think** and what we **do**

Emotion Literacy Strategies

1 THINKING FLEXIBLY

- ▶ Practice looking at situations differently as this can change how we feel
- ▶ Evaluate the thoughts that make us feel happy, sad, excited, angry, or nervous
- ▶ Consider different thoughts for the same situation and how they make you feel

2 QUICK CALM

- ▶ Helps with relaxation and responding to frustration in positive and healthy ways
- ▶ Steps: Y-E-S
 - You're in a peaceful place (visualize)
 - Ease your muscles (relax)
 - Slow your breathing (from the diaphragm)

3 EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- ▶ Give someone time and space to cool down
- ▶ Listen attentively and offer your full attention (eyes and ears)
- ▶ Validate and accept their feelings and emotions, even if you do not agree
- ▶ Summarize and reflect what they are saying

Let's Try It

EXAMPLE: Kevin received a low score on a recent math test.

CONSIDER:

- ▶ What might Kevin be thinking?
e.g. "I'm never going to pass," or "I'll do better next time"
- ▶ How might each thought make him feel both emotionally and physically?
e.g. Emotionally: worried, hopeless, motivated. Physically: tense, shaking, racing heart rate
- ▶ What might he do based on how he feels and thinks?
e.g. avoid studying, study harder
- ▶ How would Kevin's feelings and actions change if he thought differently?