

EQ in your PJs

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Online with R. Keeth Matheny

BOUNCING BACK FROM CHALLENGES Part 3: Recognizing Healthy and Unhealthy Levels of Emotions

Emotions are a normal, healthy part of the human experience. Our bodies and brains trigger a sense of joy when we're happy, fear when we may be in danger, anger when provoked, and sadness when we feel alone or adrift.

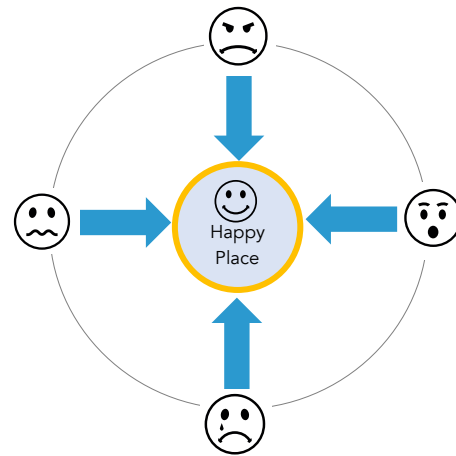
Sometimes emotions can overwhelm us. Things can look okay on the outside, but inside there can be an overwhelming sense of angst, dread, anger, or sadness.

Our emotions are messengers designed to get our attention, cue us to action, signal for help, and/or motivate us to make an adjustment and get back to our happy place.

Recognizing your emotions and *why* you are feeling them is the first step to soothing them.

Also important is recognizing the **difference between healthy/functional and dysfunctional** levels of emotions. Healthy emotions usually last for short periods of time (minutes, hours, days), you know what triggered them, and you find they get better with effort or time. Dysfunctional emotion levels usually last longer (days, weeks, months) and even if you try, you can't seem to get over them. You may stay sad or anxious or mad for long and uncontrollable periods of time.

Unhealthy levels of emotions impact how you think and feel. You may find yourself constantly thinking about it (also called "ruminating") and having trouble concentrating on other things. It may also be affecting your



physical health and habits (sleeping too much or not sleeping well, overeating or not eating; feeling low energy or irritable).

Sometimes the emotion itself becomes bigger, more powerful than the original problem. You feel helpless against a strong, overpowering sense of angst.

With high levels of sadness or anxiety, people often want to withdraw and be by themselves. Their friendships and relationships seem to take more energy than they have. But, **connecting to someone else is the most important first step toward feeling better.** Talking to one friend or family member or another caring adult is essential to healing and gaining more mastery over strong, overwhelming emotions.

Navigating strong emotions takes inner strength and motivation – but also, importantly, can benefit from external resources. As Mr. Matheny said in the video, sometimes you need additional tools and supports to come alongside you and help overcome obstacles.

EQ in your PJs

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Online with R. Keeth Matheny




BOUNCING BACK FROM CHALLENGES Part 3: Recognizing Healthy and Unhealthy Levels of Emotions

What have you learned? In the video, Mr. Matheny described three levels of emotional challenges or obstacles. The first level is smaller problems you can handle on your own. The next level is bigger problems that need additional [emotional management tools](#) like talking it out (with a friend/adult), or walking it out (exercise), or writing it out (journaling).



The third level is obstacles that are too big to handle on your own like trying to push a giant boulder up a hill. No matter how hard you try, the boulder is bigger than you are and you need someone to help push or it might start rolling back on you. With big emotional boulders, counselors and support groups are important resources to help empower you and give you the strength and skills necessary to navigate tough obstacles.

APPLICATION: For each category below, give two examples of challenges you have experienced, or may experience, as you get older that require the different levels of supports:

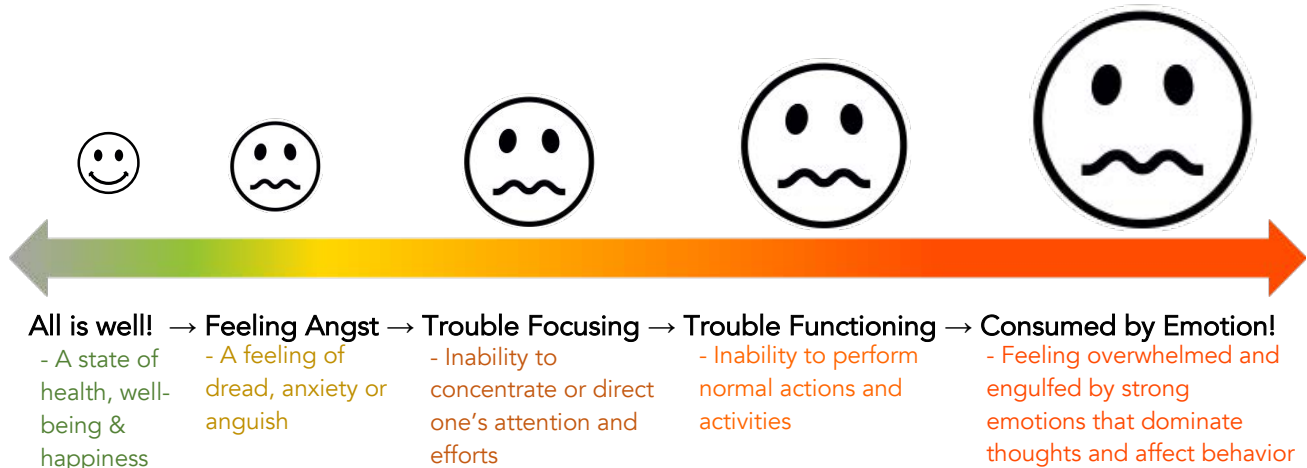
 <p>LEVEL 1 Challenges You can handle it on your own.</p>	<p>Example: My friend hasn't called me back, and I'm afraid she might be mad at me.</p>	<p>Example:</p>	<p>Example:</p>
 <p>LEVEL 2 Challenges You can use emotional management strategies to help (e.g., "talk it out")</p>	<p>Example: I'm really worried I'm not going to do well on this next test.</p>	<p>Example:</p>	<p>Example:</p>
 <p>LEVEL 3 Challenges You would benefit from mental health resources (counselor or support group)</p>	<p>Example: My friend has been really sad lately. She's not acting like herself. I'm afraid she might hurt herself.</p>	<p>Example:</p>	<p>Example:</p>

EQ in your PJs

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Online with R. Keeth Matheny

BOUNCING BACK FROM CHALLENGES Part 3: Recognizing Healthy and Unhealthy Levels of Emotions

What do you think? What is the strongest emotion you have been feeling lately and/or for longer periods of time? It may be anger or anxiety or sadness or something else. How would you describe the intensity of that emotion? Which level on the scale below can you relate to the most:



This scale of emotional intensity helps define the difference between “functional” and “dysfunctional” levels of emotions. Emotions in the green and yellow range usually come and go as different situations arise. Emotions in the orange through red range last for longer periods of time (days/months) and start interfering with your ability to concentrate and successfully navigate the opportunities and challenges of life. These are “LEVEL 3” emotion levels that would truly benefit from outside help and resources. If you or someone you know is feeling consumed by emotions, it is important to reach out for additional support and assistance.

APPLICATION: You may not be able to relate to LEVEL 3 emotions now, but likely, sometime in your lifetime you may experience an emotional challenge that requires additional support. If you needed emotional support and guidance...

#1 – Who in your life would you talk to about your concerns? (It can be a family member, friend, counselor, mentor, coach, teacher, etc.)

#2 – What mental health resources do you think would be helpful? CLICK to learn more about the National Alliance on Mental Health: <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Teens-Young-Adults>. Write three things you learned from this resource:

#3 – Choose a calming strategy that works for you. Try this link from another EQ in your PJs school district and choose your favorite strategy: <https://sites.google.com/ahschools.us/virtual-calming-room/home>.