

The Skills of Emotional Intelligence:

How the RULER Skills Help Us in our Lives

R

Recognizing emotions helps us to:

- Build greater self- and social awareness.
- Better understand ourselves and support others.
- Collaborate and work well in groups.

U

Understanding emotions helps us to:

- Anticipate, manage, or prevent unwanted feelings.
- Cultivate the feelings we'd like to have.
- Support other's emotional needs.

L

Labeling emotions helps us to:

- Have greater clarity about our feelings.
- Communicate our feelings to others clearly.
- Choose the best strategies for managing our own and other's emotions.

E

Expressing emotions helps us to:

- Get our needs met.
- Reveal our true feelings to others.
- Be skillful in social situations.

R

Regulating emotions helps us to:

- Be more effective in reaching our goals.
- Make wise choices about how we respond to emotional situations.
- Have better health and overall wellbeing.

The Skills of Emotional Intelligence:

Practicing the RULER Skills at Home

R

Practice **recognizing** emotions by:

- Paying attention to and discussing cues in ourselves and others, including body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and the signals in our bodies.
- Acknowledging our own emotions and those of others.
- Asking others how they're feeling, because what you see on the outside does not necessarily convey what they're experiencing on the inside.

U

Practice **understanding** emotions by:

- Reflecting on your emotional response to and your interpretation of a situation or event.
- Exploring how a feeling influences behaviors in yourself and others.
- Asking questions about the underlying cause of your feelings listening for clues, but without judging or making assumptions.

L

Practice **labeling** emotions by:

- Modeling and using a wide range of emotion words.
- Encouraging children to move beyond simple labels like sad or mad. Are they annoyed, disappointed, or frustrated, instead?
- Building your feeling word vocabulary by discovering new words in books, films or conversations

E

Practice **expressing** emotions by:

- Showing a full range of emotions, even uncomfortable ones like frustration and guilt.
- Helping children see the impact that how they express their emotions has on others, including acceptable behavior for expressing emotions.
- Helping children evaluate the best time, way, and place to express their feelings.

R

Practice **regulating** emotions by:

- Practicing self-care (getting enough sleep, eating healthy, and regular physical activity).
- Analyzing which strategy would be most helpful to manage an emotion to experience less or more of the feeling (or even maintain the feeling).
- Introducing and modeling helpful strategies such as breathing, positive self-talk, and reframing.

Creating a Family Charter

The Family Charter is an agreement we make to act in ways that help us to feel the way we want to feel in our home. Everyone has a voice in creating a Charter and everyone has a responsibility to uphold it.

Getting Started

Planning:

- Find a time when everyone is feeling calm, focused, and ready to work together.
- Use a comfortable area like the living room or the dinner table.

Materials:

- Construction paper or blank sheets of paper, and colored pencils or markers or computer.



Step 1: How do we want to feel in our family?

- Ask everyone to think about how they would like to feel at home.
- Ask everyone to write down 5-8 feelings they want to have at home more often.
- Combine all the feeling words on one master list.
- Discuss each word and notice which feeling words have similar meanings. For example, if you have both "appreciated" and "valued" on the list, can you choose just one?
- Narrow the list down to the top 5 emotions you want to feel more often, and write them down a new piece of paper.

Step 2: What can we do in order to have those feelings?

- For each word, discuss one or two specific, observable behavior(s) that each family member would need to exhibit in order to have the feeling as often as possible.
- For example, 'being nice' is not a real behavior. Smiling or saying 'good morning' to each other are behaviors that everyone can see.

Putting it all together!

- Now it's time to pull all the pieces together and create your own living document.
- Be creative! Use your family's talent and have fun together.
- There are no limits: it can be big or small, colorful, or filled with drawings. What's most important is that you have a final document that includes the top 5 feelings, and the specific and observable behaviors that promote the feelings
- Once the Family Charter is complete, everyone must sign it! Everyone's voice matters!
- Display your Charter prominently in your home so everyone can keep these feelings and behaviors in mind throughout the day.

Keeping the Family Charter Alive

- Schedule weekly or monthly family meetings to review the Charter. What's working? What's not?
- Revise the Family Charter as needed. It should be a living agreement.
- Have each family member set a daily or weekly goal related to part of the Charter that he or she finds the most challenging to honor.
- Be creative - post weekly quotes, send out family emails, perform spontaneous acts to demonstrate the feelings in the Charter and show appreciation for your family members.
- Celebrate your accomplishments!