

## Emotional intelligence and its roles at Forest School

### *Some roles of Emotional Intelligence at Forest School*

Working with and developing Emotional Intelligence is often a key part of Forest School practice and programme aims. It supports most of the Forest School principles and criteria for good practice. (Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association, 2020)

Emotional Intelligence is:

- key to our holistic development.
- a foundational set of skills in developing independence, resilience and creativity.
- core to developing own practice as a reflective practitioner
- core to effective two-way communication
- core to building relationships, staff teams and a community of learning
- core to developing nature connection
- important for developing sustainable dispositions and taking action for biodiversity and sustainability.

### **Where does term Emotional Intelligence come from?**

Emotional Intelligence was the name that Peter Salovey and John Mayer, then of the University of New Hampshire, called the collection of personal, emotional and social abilities that they were trying to measure when they began their research in 1990.

Their work was popularised when journalist Daniel Goleman wrote the bestseller *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* in 1996. (Goleman, 1996)

Mayer and Salovey have continued to research the importance of Emotional Intelligence, creating accurate and useful models for developing Emotional Intelligence in different contexts, including all levels of education. You can see a lot of the recent work on the Yale Centre from Emotional Intelligence website .

## ***What is Mayer and Salovey's Emotional Intelligence model?***

According to Mayer and Salovey, Emotional Intelligence is:

- a set of social and emotional hard skills that teachable and measurable
- influenced by genetics, developmental sequence, relationships, environment, and culture.

It can be developed and strengthened throughout life.

For them, Emotional Intelligence is not about perpetual happiness, and ignoring difficult emotion. We are encouraged to build the ability to be open to and work with our more unpleasant emotions as well as more pleasurable ones.

There are 26 hard skills are grouped into 4 branches, with each branch broken down into specific abilities.

**Perceiving emotion** - seven skills including the ability to:

- perceive emotions in other people through their vocal cues, facial expression, language, and behaviour,
- and identify emotions in one's own physical states, feelings and thoughts.

**Using emotions** (facilitating through using emotion) - five skills including ability to:

- select problems based on how one's ongoing emotional state might facilitate cognition. "All emotions can be smart."
- generate emotions as a means to relate to experiences of another person.

**Understanding emotions** - eight skills including ability to:

- determine the antecedents, meanings, and consequences of emotions.
- label emotions and recognize relations among them.

**Managing emotions** - six skills including ability to:

- monitor emotional reactions to determine their reasonableness.
- engage with emotions if they are helpful; disengage if not.
- stay open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings, as needed, and to the information they convey.

The full list of abilities is available at the link in bibliography below (Institute, 2020). There are lots of slimmed down effective working models and resources for developing emotional intelligence in the context of working with children. See the Forest School Training Collaborative website for further links and resources.

## Bibliography

Forestschoollassociation.org. 2020. *Full Principles And Criteria For Good Practice | Forest School Association*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>> [Accessed 9 December 2020].

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