

Emotional Intelligence in Practice: Supporting Client Growth and Clinician Care

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Melanie McNally, PsyD

Worked in the field of psychology since 2006

Specialized in adolescents since 2013

Masters degree in counseling

Doctorate degree in clinical psychology

Books: The Emotionally Intelligent Teen, Helping Your Unmotivated Teen, Counting Dragonflies with Workbook

White House Panelist during Biden Administration to discuss teen mental health issues

Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest

- **Statement of Presence or Absence of Conflicts of Interest:**

I have no financial relationships or other conflicts of interest to disclose regarding this presentation. There is no commercial or financial support for this presentation.

- **Disclosure of AI-Generated Content:**

Parts of this presentation were developed with the assistance of AI-generated content (ChatGPT), specifically in the areas of content creation and structuring. AI was used as a tool to help draft and organize ideas, but all clinical and professional content remains grounded in established psychological practices and my own expertise.

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in adolescent therapy
2. Design practical strategies for building EI in adolescents
3. Apply strategies for self-care and maintenance of emotional balance as clinicians

Additional Goals

Understanding the Role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in Adolescent Therapy:

Clinicians will learn how the key components of EI—self-awareness, social awareness, self-regulation, and effective use of emotions—can enhance therapeutic outcomes for adolescents, including fostering emotional growth and promoting behavioral change.

Developing Practical Strategies for Building EI in Adolescents:

Clinicians will gain practical tools and exercises to integrate EI into their work with adolescent clients, helping them develop emotional intelligence and resilience in clinical settings.

Promoting Self-Care and Maintaining Emotional Balance as Clinicians:

Clinicians will explore strategies for developing their own EI to improve therapeutic effectiveness, prevent burnout, and sustain emotional balance, ensuring they can provide the best care for their clients while managing the demands of their work.

Overview

- **Key Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence:** Self-awareness, social awareness, self-regulation, and effective use of emotions
- **How EI Enhances Client Outcomes:** Its role in emotional and behavioral change
- **The Importance of EI for Psychologists:** How it impacts therapeutic effectiveness and self-care

Overview

- **Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents:** Techniques and exercises for fostering EI skills in therapy
- **Building Resilience Through EI:** Tools to help clients manage stress and adversity
- **Maintaining Emotional Balance as Clinicians:** Strategies for self-care and emotional regulation in your practice



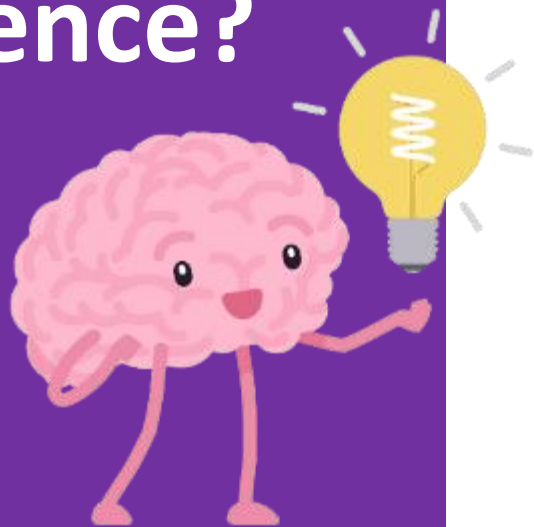
What is Emotional Intelligence?

Scientific Literature – In academic and research settings, EI is often defined as a set of mental abilities related to processing and managing emotions. This typically includes skills such as:

- Perceiving emotions (recognizing emotions in oneself and others)
- Understanding emotions (knowing how emotions evolve and influence behavior)
- Regulating emotions (managing one's own emotions effectively)
- Using emotions (applying emotions to facilitate thinking and problem-solving)

This approach is often associated with Mayer and Salovey's ability model of EI, which views EI as a cognitive ability similar to IQ.

What is Emotional Intelligence?



Popular Media – In mainstream discussions (such as self-help books, leadership training, and workplace coaching), EI is often described more in terms of social competencies. These emphasize interpersonal skills like:

- Relationship management (resolving conflicts, influencing others, fostering teamwork)
- Empathy (understanding and responding to others' emotions)
- Social awareness (picking up on social cues and group dynamics)

This aligns more closely with Daniel Goleman's mixed model of EI, which integrates emotional abilities with leadership and social skills.

Bridging Scientific Literature and Popular Media

4 Dimension Model best represents EI literature

Noticing and
understanding
emotions in
oneself.

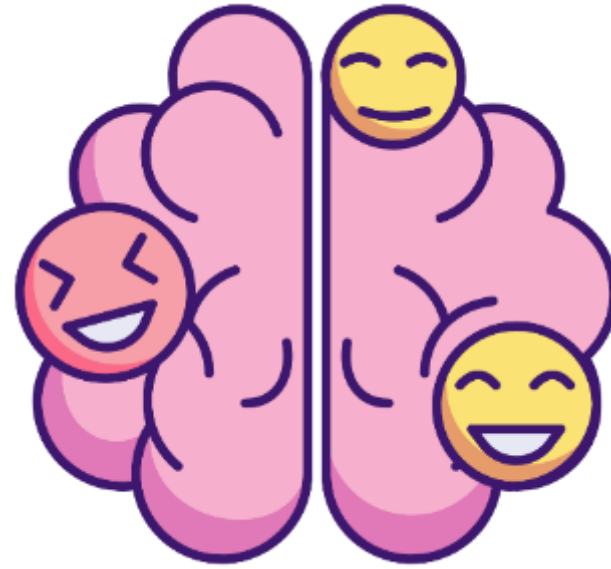
Noticing and
understanding
emotions in
others.

Effective
regulation of
emotion in
oneself.

Using
emotions to
facilitate
performance.

Davies, Stankov and Roberts' (1998)

How EI Enhances Client Outcomes: Its Role in Emotional and Behavioral Change



Improved Emotional Regulation:

Clients with strong EI skills are better able to recognize and manage their emotions. This leads to more stable emotional states and less impulsivity, allowing for more thoughtful decision-making and effective coping strategies.

How EI Enhances Client Outcomes: Its Role in Emotional and Behavioral Change



Increased Empathy and Social Awareness:

High EI helps clients develop a deeper understanding of their own emotions and the emotions of others. This improves interpersonal relationships, reduces conflict, and fosters healthier connections with peers, family, and authority figures.

How EI Enhances Client Outcomes: Its Role in Emotional and Behavioral Change



Enhanced Self-Motivation:

Self-awareness and emotional regulation foster intrinsic motivation. Clients can set meaningful goals aligned with their values, persevere through challenges, and maintain focus, even in the face of setbacks.

How EI Enhances Client Outcomes: Its Role in Emotional and Behavioral Change



Improved Stress Management:

By recognizing emotional triggers and practicing self-regulation, clients are better equipped to handle stress and adversity. This leads to lower levels of anxiety and depression and greater resilience in difficult situations.

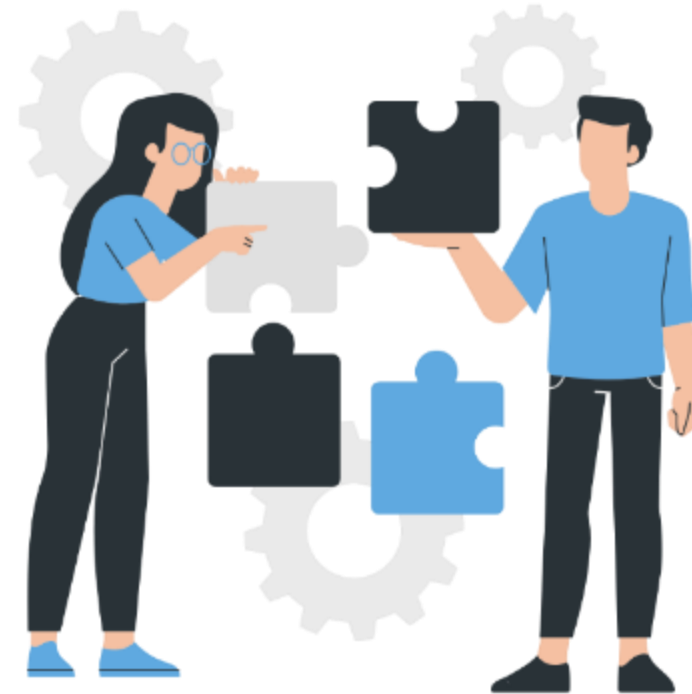
How EI Enhances Client Outcomes: Its Role in Emotional and Behavioral Change



Promoting Behavioral Change:

EI helps clients understand how their emotions drive behavior, enabling them to make conscious choices that align with long-term goals rather than reacting impulsively. This self-regulation can result in reduced maladaptive behaviors like avoidance, substance abuse, or aggression.

How EI Enhances Client Outcomes: Its Role in Emotional and Behavioral Change



Better Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution:

Clients with EI skills approach problems with a clear understanding of their emotional states and can navigate conflicts more effectively, using both emotional insight and rational thinking to resolve issues.

The Importance of EI for Psychologists:

How it Impacts Therapeutic Effectiveness and Self-care



Enhancing Therapeutic Rapport:

Psychologists with high EI can more easily attune to clients' emotional states, creating a strong therapeutic alliance. By demonstrating empathy, understanding, and emotional validation, clinicians foster a safe and supportive environment, which is crucial for client trust and openness.

The Importance of EI for Psychologists:

How it Impacts Therapeutic Effectiveness and Self-care



Improved Emotional Awareness:
Self-awareness allows psychologists to recognize and manage their own emotional reactions during sessions. This awareness prevents emotional hijacking and helps clinicians stay focused, objective, and grounded, ensuring they respond to clients' needs rather than reacting impulsively.

The Importance of EI for Psychologists:

How it Impacts Therapeutic Effectiveness and Self-care



Modeling Emotional Regulation:

Psychologists who practice emotional regulation can model this skill for their clients. By demonstrating effective self-regulation, clinicians teach clients how to manage their emotions, which is key for emotional growth and behavioral change.

The Importance of EI for Psychologists:

How it Impacts Therapeutic Effectiveness and Self-care



Increased Empathy and Understanding:

EI helps psychologists better understand and empathize with clients' perspectives. This deeper understanding leads to more effective interventions, as therapists can tailor approaches that align with clients' emotional states and needs.

The Importance of EI for Psychologists:

How it Impacts Therapeutic Effectiveness and Self-care



Enhancing Supervision and Collaboration:

High EI aids in navigating professional relationships, including supervision and collaboration with colleagues. By effectively managing emotions and responding to feedback with openness, psychologists can foster productive, supportive working relationships.

The Importance of EI for Psychologists:

How it Impacts Therapeutic Effectiveness and Self-care



Self-Care and Preventing Burnout:

EI is essential for maintaining emotional balance as a clinician. Being attuned to one's own emotional needs and practicing self-regulation can help psychologists avoid compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, and burnout. Self-awareness allows clinicians to set healthy boundaries and practice stress management strategies.

The Importance of EI for Psychologists:

How it Impacts Therapeutic Effectiveness and Self-care



Sustaining Long-Term Effectiveness:

Practicing EI promotes resilience, which supports sustained therapeutic effectiveness. By continuously checking in with their own emotional health, psychologists can maintain the energy, focus, and clarity needed to provide high-quality care to clients over time.

Bridging Scientific Literature and Popular Media

4 Dimension Model best represents EI literature

Noticing and
understanding
emotions in
oneself.

Noticing and
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Effective
regulation of
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Using
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Noticing and Understanding Emotions in Oneself

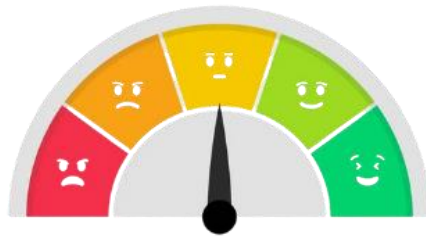


This involves the ability to understand one's deep emotions and to be able to express them naturally. A person with high ability in this area will be better than most people in sensing and acknowledging his or her emotions.

- Awareness of thoughts and physical sensations
- Allowing emotions to be present
- Labelling emotions

Noticing and Understanding Emotions in Oneself - Exercises

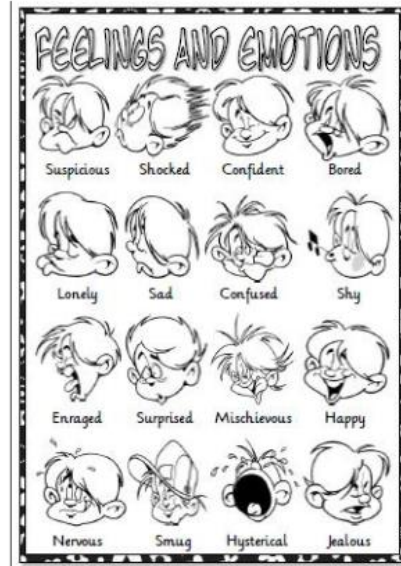
The Emotion Meter



Using Music to Express Feelings



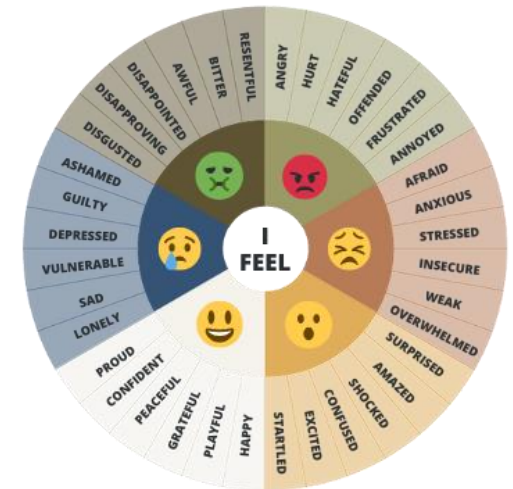
The Feeling Dictionary



Coloring In for Emotional Clarity



The Feeling Wheel



Noticing and Understanding Emotions in Others



This relates to the ability to perceive and understand emotions in other people. A person with high ability in this area will be better than most people at noticing and understanding other people's emotions.

- Awareness of emotional signs
- Inferring emotions from verbal and nonverbal signs (body language, facial expressions, emotional words used, pitch of voice, etc.)

Noticing and Understanding Emotions in Others - Exercises

Help Them See Others'
Perspectives



Work on Active Listening in
the Classroom



Have Them Read Body
Language and Tone in
Characters



Effective Regulation of Emotion in Oneself

This involves the ability to effectively deal with one's own emotions. A person with high capability in this aspect will be better than most people in preventing his or her emotions from automatically influencing his behavior.

For instance, when a person with high emotion regulation skills experiences anger, he will be able to manage the anger in such a way that he does not say or do anything that he may regret.

- Choosing how to respond to emotions
- Thinking before acting
- Separation of emotion from logic

Various Strategies to Change Intensity of Emotion



Distraction



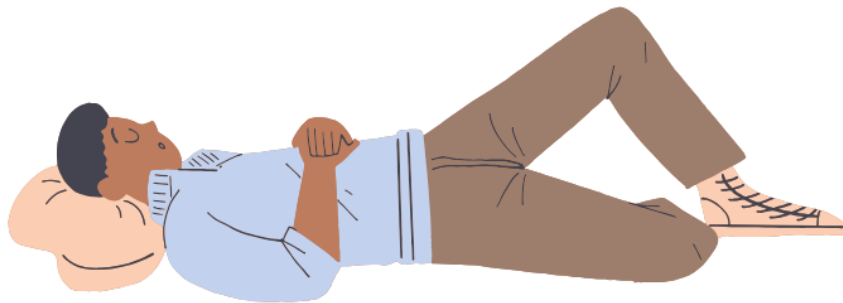
Positive Imagery



Venting



Breathing



Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Acceptance



Meditation

Various Strategies to Change Perspective on Emotion or Emotional Trigger



Expressive
Writing



Reframing



Growth
Mindset

Using Emotions to Facilitate Performance

This relates to the ability to make use of emotions by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance. A person who is highly capable in this aspect is able to encourage themselves to continuously do better. They are able to direct their emotions in positive and productive directions.

- Using positive emotions to enhance performance and manage difficult circumstances
- Using emotions to influence the social environment

Using Emotions to Facilitate Performance

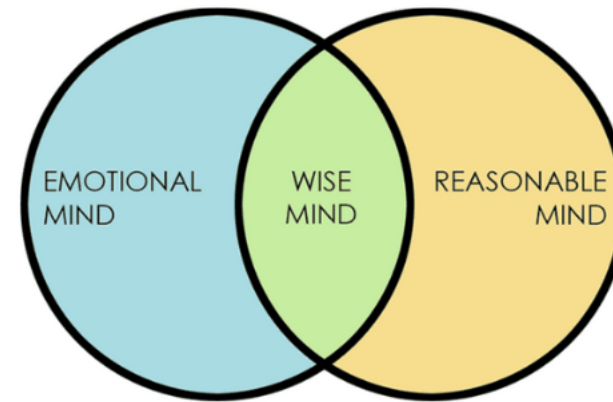
Emotions can facilitate better decision-making, motivation, and overall effectiveness when we:

- rely on coping tools to help manage them
- use our emotions to better understand our needs and values
- are able to use our emotions to communicate effectively with others
- allow them to help fuel our creativity

Using Emotions to Facilitate Performance - Exercises



Healing Through
Writing



Wise Mind

Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents



Feeling Wheels
Feeling Thermometer
Make curious observations
Help connect emotions with
behaviors
Body Scans



Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents

Signs of Dysregulation

Encourage breaks

Encourage self-soothing
activities (rocking, coloring,
light pressure, music)

Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents

Logic and Reasoning
Habits

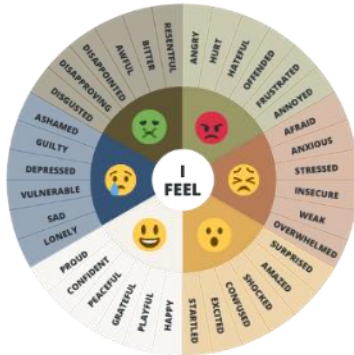
Turn anxiety into excitement

Love It and Loathe It

Time Audits

Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents

The Feeling Wheel & Emotional Check Ins



Journaling



Brain Dumps



Emotional Contagion



Mindfulness





I am
CAPABLE

Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents

Self-soothing strategies before exams or high pressure activities (Music, breathing, coloring, etc.)

Affirmations

Social Media Cleanse (emotional contagion and social comparison)



Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents



Types of thoughts (motivational, instructional, factual, critical, judgmental, narration, observational, random)

Reframing thoughts

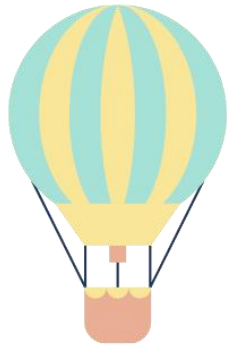
Mindset work

To Vent or Not



Practical Interventions for Building EI in Adolescents

Let It Go



Visualize Hot Air Balloon



Breathe in peace, Breathe out situation



Nature



Journal



Recall Happy Memories



Gratitude

Tools to Build Resilience

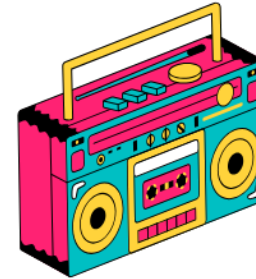
Exercise



Get Creative



Music



Mantras



*Good
Self Care*



*Emotions as House
Guests*



Meaningful Goals



**We're All Here Because We're
Dedicated to Helping Adolescents**



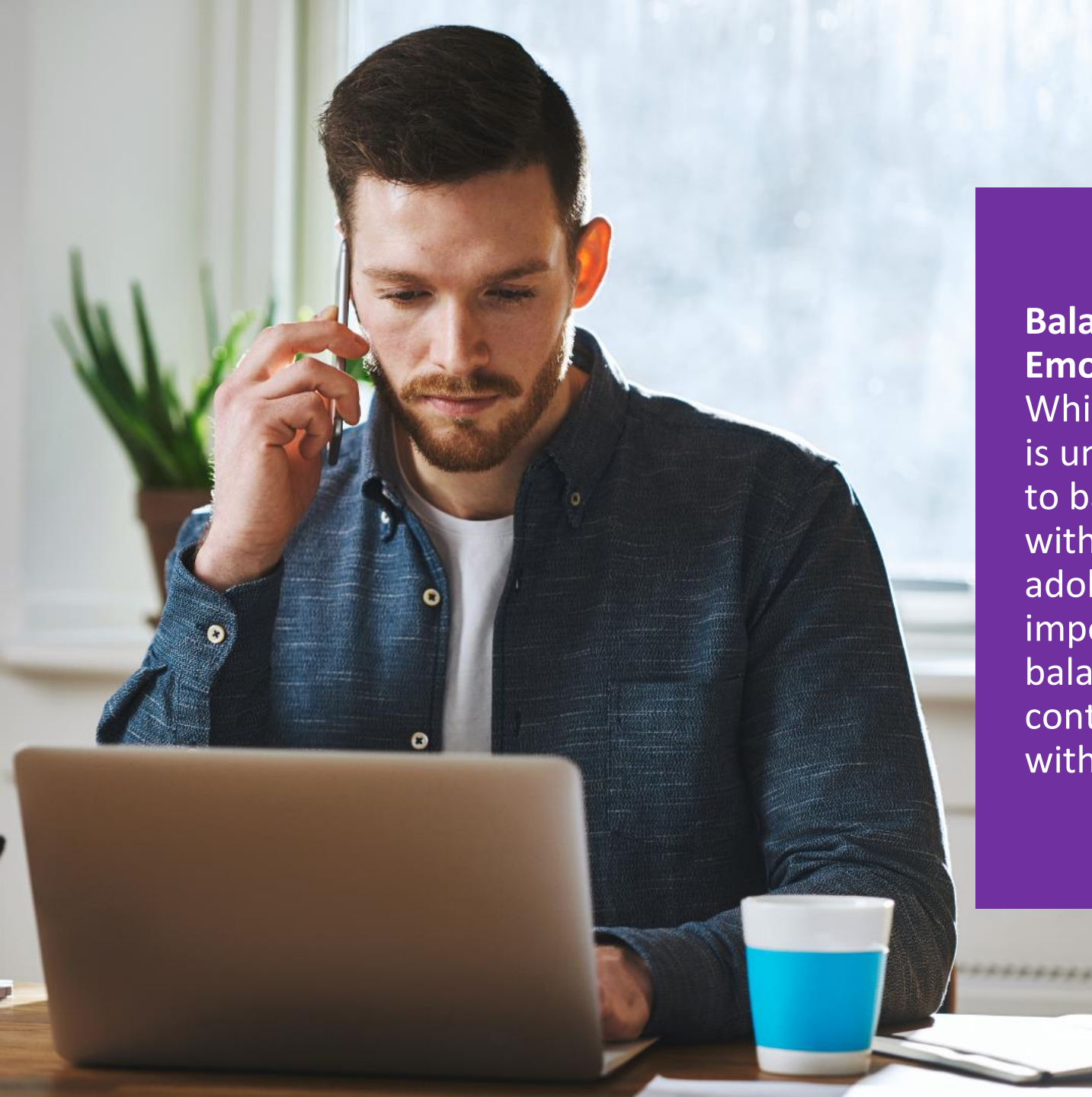
Passion for Our Work:

As clinicians, we're deeply committed to helping adolescents navigate emotional and behavioral challenges. Our work has the power to positively shape their futures and guide them toward healthier emotional growth.



Finding Meaning in Our Work:

Many of us are motivated by the meaningful impact we have on our clients' lives. Helping adolescents build self-awareness, resilience, and emotional intelligence can be incredibly rewarding, both professionally and personally.



Balancing Clinical Demands with Emotional Wellbeing:

While our dedication to our clients is unwavering, it can be challenging to balance the demands of therapy with the emotional needs of the adolescents we serve. It's important to maintain emotional balance as clinicians, so we can continue to provide the best care without becoming overwhelmed.

Set Healthy Emotional Boundaries



Compassion without absorption
Define your role clearly
Practice mental closure

Prioritize Self-Care and Emotional Recovery



Emotional check-ins

Intentional breaks

Personalized self-care

Create a Sustainable Support System



Colleagues and community

Use resources

Delegate and collaborate

Integrating Emotional Intelligence into Practice

EI as a Core Element of Therapeutic Success:

By fostering emotional intelligence in both ourselves and our adolescent clients, we can enhance therapeutic outcomes, support emotional growth, and promote resilience.

Integrating Emotional Intelligence into Practice

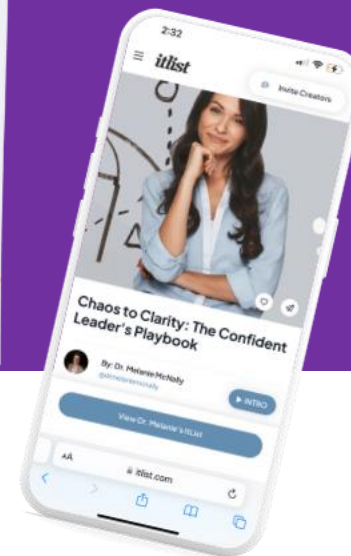
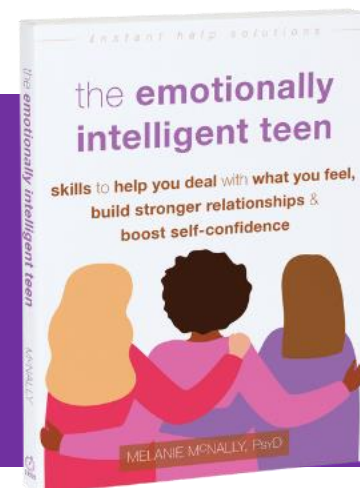
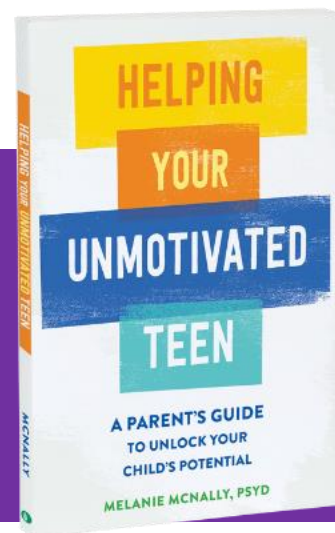
Maintaining Balance as Clinicians:

Practicing EI not only benefits our clients but also ensures we can sustain our own emotional wellbeing and avoid burnout. Self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy are essential tools for thriving in our demanding roles.

Integrating Emotional Intelligence into Practice

Commitment to Client and Self-Care:

As we continue to help adolescents navigate their emotional and behavioral challenges, let's remember the importance of integrating EI into our practice. By nurturing our own emotional health, we're better equipped to support the growth and development of those we serve.



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Q&A With Dr. McNally

- We will now discuss select questions that were submitted via the Q&A feature throughout the presentation.
- Due to time constraints, we will not be able to address every question asked.