

EMOTIONAL REGULATION – A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS

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Abstract

The contribution is aimed at development of a training program for teachers focused on the adoption, implementation and evaluation methodology to improve interpersonal communication skills, the development of emotion regulation and resilience. In the theoretical section it explains the concepts of emotion, emotion regulation, social skills and communication, resilience, and their relevance to the profession of the educator. In the application section we have designed the training program. The plan is elaborated in detail according to the content of the topics of each hour. The overall scope of the program is 120 hours. The themes from the method are listed in the practical part of the program which is designed in a range of 48 hours. The training program is developed for the purpose of continuous training of educators in the form of presentational.

Keywords: *Emotion regulation, interpersonal competence, resilience, training of educators.*

1. Introduction

Perceiving emotions and thinking about them is essential for emotional regulation. Emotion regulation is aimed at maintaining, strengthening, or suppressing emotions and their expression. If emotions are excessively suppressed, a certain emptiness and distance is created. Conversely, if they get out of control and are exaggerated, they can become morbid and bothersome. The ability to keep emotions under control is the key to a satisfying emotional life. Emotion regulation is the process by which an individual influences what emotions he will have, how he will experience and express them. With the help of emotion regulation, it is possible to achieve that a person remains calm in stressful situations, knows how to defend himself against feelings of fear and quickly regenerates after negative feelings.

According to Schultz and Roberts (2007), self-regulation can be perceived as a form of problem solving with the aim of mitigating the difference between reality and the target value of a given internal state. In this case, self-regulatory activities aim at changing the current emotional state to the target state. According to Martinčková (2012), the main components of self-regulation are:

- Reliability – the ability to observe the basic rules of decency.
- Conscientiousness – the ability to take responsibility for one's own behavior and performance.
- Adaptability – the ability to adapt to changes.
- Innovativeness – the ability to accept innovations well and come up with new ideas yourself.

Self-regulation is based on the knowledge that people are able to direct their own feelings and internal processes. They can thus learn to handle emotionally tense situations. According to Marman & Jurášek (2014), we can point to three key areas that need to be developed: 1. Get rid of your fear. 2. Promote your strengths. 3. Be more receptive every day.

It is good to know the influence of a specific emotional experience on motivation and will, on achieving success, for example, how positive and negative emotions affect the way of thinking and the way of solving problems. If he can recognize his own feelings, define his needs and set goals, he can work better with his emotions.

1.1. Emotional regulation strategies

Emotional regulation strategies relate to the experience of emotions and are focused either on the prerequisites for the emergence of emotions or on the manifestations of emotions themselves (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014) identified a total of 9 strategies for cognitive regulation of emotions – self-blame, acceptance, thinking, positive focus, planning, positive reappraisal, judging in context, catastrophizing and blaming others. When developing emotional regulation, it is necessary to focus on strengthening

strategies that positively affect our emotional experience. They are mainly acceptance, positive focus, assessment in context. A suitable strategy is to accept the inevitability of negative emotions and assess them in context, i.e., knowing that even negative emotions contain valuable information that can help a person to act effectively. Inappropriate strategies are, for example, passivity and self-blame, when the individual does not take into account his needs and experiences, or, on the contrary, aggression and blaming others, when the individual expresses his emotions without inhibitions verbally and non-verbally.

It is possible to regulate the experience of emotions and to reach the target state more easily with the help of training. Pletzer elaborated several methods of emotional regulation (Pletzer, 2009):

- visualization of the target state
- elimination of stereotypes and cancellation of bonds
- leaving the comfort zone
- registering negative feelings and activating positive ones
- imaginations evoking feelings
- judging from a distance, changing the point of view
- awareness of responsibility for your own feelings.

Emotional regulation in the profession of teachers significantly affects the educational and educational results of their work. On the one hand, there is self-regulation, when teachers consciously work with their own emotions, and on the other hand, they influence the emotional development and motivation of pupils and students. The goal of emotion regulation in educators should be the ability to direct their emotions so that they can better manage stressful situations, eliminate negative experiences, and be able to actively use emotions in the learning process. Perceiving other people's emotions and influencing them is an interpersonal competence in the construct of emotional intelligence.

1.2. Requirements for teacher competencies

School is an important socialization institution that fulfills four basic goals – educational, professional, social-civic and personal (Zel'ová, 2007). The effectiveness of the teaching process is related to the characteristics of the learner, teacher, learning material and learning conditions. Emotions are naturally part of the educational process. Their sources are related to all aspects of school life, the learning process and relationships between teachers, students and parents (Zel'ová, 2007).

All these areas can be a source of both positive and negative emotions. The predominance of positive emotions is likely to be reflected in the pupils' performance. As he further states, such pleasant emotions as joy, self-satisfaction, and satisfaction can be associated with success, mastering tasks and problems, recognition and appreciation from the teacher, and gaining the respect of classmates. The teacher has an irreplaceable role and responsibility in creating a pleasant emotional atmosphere in the classroom. Among the primary requirements placed on the teacher in the context of developing students' emotional intelligence are personal maturity, appropriate social competences, sensitivity and receptivity, the ability to accept individual peculiarities of students in the field of experience and behavior (Salbot, 2011).

An important element of a teacher's work is communication with parents of students. He should try to get the parents to cooperate. Gaining parents' trust and establishing good cooperation requires certain abilities, social and communication skills from the teacher. He encounters situations where family relationships are problematic and the child's behavior is negatively affected by them. He also meets parents who take a large part of the responsibility from the child on themselves, or who overestimate their child.

Sometimes parents behave inappropriately, aggressively, offensively. It is necessary to prepare for the meeting with the parents so that the teacher can argue objectively and create a friendly atmosphere. Training in verbal and non-verbal communication, which condition the effectiveness of the interview, can significantly help them in this. The third area is relationships with colleagues and superiors.

The teacher should contribute to a positive working atmosphere, support cooperation in the exchange of experience, provide and seek help if he needs it. Assertiveness, creativity and initiative will be significantly manifested in this area. Schulze and Roberts suggested that pre-service and continuing teacher education should include subjects that meet the needs of supporting the development of emotional intelligence in schools.

As stated by Schultze & Roberts (2007): educators need a wide repertoire of knowledge, methods and professional experience using emotional intelligence in learning and achievement situations. Emotional skills can contribute to improving the quality of cognitive functions and intellectual behavioral outputs, especially through the improvement of decision-making processes, self-management and stress regulation. The teachers themselves are aware of the importance of self-knowledge and self-reflection for the successful performance of the teaching profession and the necessity of improving communication skills.

2. Design and methods

Based on knowledge and theoretical studies, we have developed an educational program for teachers, focused on the adoption, implementation and evaluation of the methodology for improving interpersonal communication competences, developing emotional intelligence and resilience.

In the process of preparation, we approached teachers to find out their opinion on the importance of teacher preparation in the field of emotional intelligence competencies. It included a short, 4-question questionnaire, which we used to verify the assumption that the education of teaching staff in the field of emotional intelligence is important and insufficient.

The sample consisted of school teachers. A total of 98 teachers were approached. Answers could be recorded on a scale from 1 to 4 with values not at all (1), weak (2), average (3), very (4).

3. Objectives of the educational program

The main goal of the educational program is to acquire knowledge in the field of individual components of EI with an emphasis on self-regulation, interpersonal skills, understand them and improve professional competences so that graduates can apply them in pedagogical activities to develop their personality and the personality of their students.

This main goal is fulfilled by specific goals:

- To understand the essence and importance of emotionality for managing one's own way of life and achieving life satisfaction.
- Deepen self-knowledge, realize responsibility for one's own emotional experience and learn ways to support them in one's students.
- Improve the ability to manage anger, anxiety and fear.
- Understand motivation more deeply and use this knowledge to motivate students more effectively.
- Increase the capacity for empathy in yourself and your students.
- To improve social perception, understanding of pupils' behavior and to be able to reveal their possible causes.
- Understand and respect the attitudes and opinions of other people, the ability to give and receive feedback.
- Improve non-verbal and verbal communication, presentation and negotiation skills.
- Know how to resolve conflicts and settle disputes more effectively.
- Understand group processes and know how to use them in practice.
- Be able to build trust and openness in interpersonal relationships, understand the importance of being able to provide help, as well as accept help, or ask for it.
- Know how to use acquired skills when innovating the educational process.
- Apply the basic principles of a healthy lifestyle in everyday life.

4. Results and conclusions

When designing the program, we placed a lot of emphasis on the practical side of the training, which is not yet sufficient in the psychological preparation of teachers. The thematic plan for the modules and suggested exercises are exemplary, the lecturer can modify or supplement them based on his own knowledge and experience. It is important to maintain the scope of the practical part and a certain playful form of exercises and teaching. The goal is for teachers to understand the individual components of emotional intelligence after completing supplementary education, and especially to be able to use them for the development of their students.

The program was compiled with an eye on the application of emotional intelligence in the teaching profession. The total scope of the program - 120 hours. Topics and methods in the practical part of the program are designed in the scope of 48 hours. We designed the program so that the individual modules build on each other and at the same time so that knowledge is expanded and consolidated through repetition. In the first part of the program, focused on intrapersonal competences, a significant part of the education is dedicated to self-awareness, self-regulation and resilience. Graduates will gain knowledge about how they can further develop these constructs, impulses and motivation for self-management. In the second part of the program, we focused on interpersonal competences and communication skills. Teachers will have the opportunity to compare the content of the lectures with their practical experience, as they use these skills in their work every day. The program should teach them to work efficiently, constructively and with interest.

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