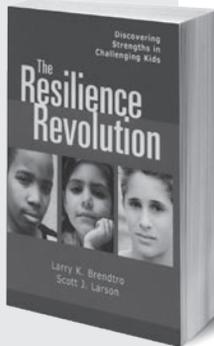


RECOMMENDED READING

Resilience Revolution

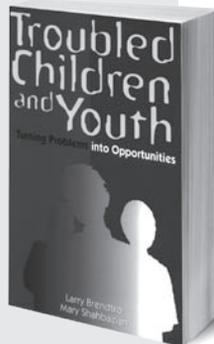
focuses on giving at-risk youth the most important factor in their success: a positive adult connection. This positive connection helps youth build resilience, the ability to persevere through and recover from adversity.



Larry Brendtro and Scott Larson use scientific research on resilience to re-frame challenging behavior as pain-based behavior. The authors carefully describe practical strategies adults can use to help young people overcome their pain and develop resilience.

Troubled Children and Youth

Authors Larry Brendtro and Mary Shahbazian draw on decades of experience for developing education and treatment programs for kids in conflict. This is the latest statement of the strength-based approach which recasts problems into opportunities for learning and growth. The book provides a comprehensive discussion of practical strategies for reaching our most difficult youth and is validated by research on positive youth development.



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reclaiming youth library

Building Emotional Intelligence

By Linda Lantieri

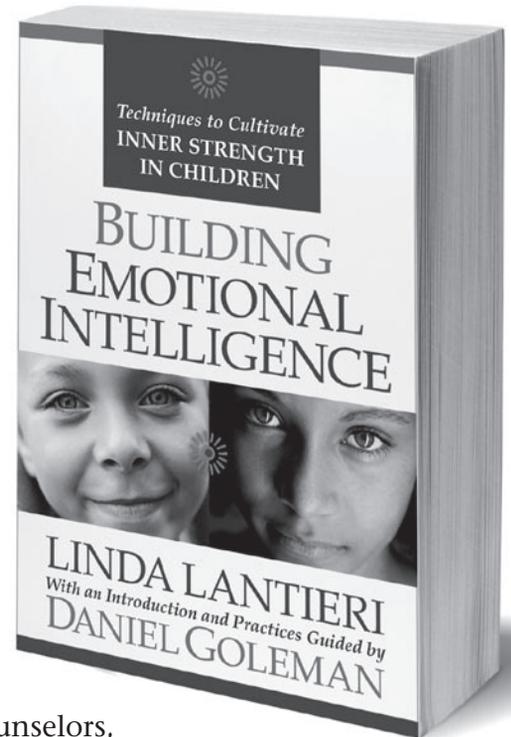
Reviewed by Jennifer J. Connor, Tina Livingston, and John H. Hoover

Though much has been written about emotional intelligence in the decade-plus since Goleman wrote about the concept, few truly useful materials have been produced for young audiences and certainly not targeting parents. Based on the stress that she saw in the children in lower Manhattan in the hours and days following the World Trade Center disaster, Lantieri observed firsthand the need for stress reduction materials targeting young people. The New York attacks merely brought children's needs into focus; Lantieri aptly observes that young people experience a host of stress-inducing events in modern life, from close relatives leaving for war, to divorce, to race-based prejudice.

This eminently practical resource is highly recommended. Though it is designed for use by parents and children together, it will also make a nice addition to the libraries of teachers, counselors, and other human services personnel. This review is divided into two sections, a description of the program and its materials, and a look at its theoretical underpinnings.

Theoretical and Research Underpinnings

Building Emotional Intelligence (BEI, Lantieri, 2008) combines concepts and techniques from cognitive and behavioral theories with Goleman's (1995) conception of emotional intelligence. The underlying premise is that by increasing children's ability to relax their bodies and boost mindfulness, they become more capable of managing their emotions and demonstrate higher levels of learning readiness. The term itself was defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who described EI in terms of recognizing one's inner states and utilizing this information to effectively guide behavior.



FEATURED BOOKS

Goleman's emotional intelligence includes such components as self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills; the goal of BEI is to improve children's abilities in each component. Lantieri provides an overview of the extensive research supporting the use of calming and mindfulness exercises to decrease emotional and physical symptoms of distress in adults. She notes that currently a group of researchers are dedicated to evaluating the benefits of these exercises with children and have been finding positive results, although those results have not been published as of this writing.

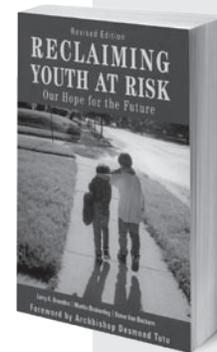
One strength of Building Emotional Intelligence is that it is strongly rooted in concepts clearly defined, and backed by a strong body of stress management research. The book is intended for parents, and therefore the research behind the exercises is explained in a writing style that is easy to read and comprehend. The end product is a culmination of work in the fields of education, psychology, child psychology and medicine. The one exception is the suggested use of the biodot, a concept for which Lantieri provides no research support.

Although the author does not explicitly espouse systemic principles, the applications in the book are supported by family systems theory. Often, stressed children learn behavioral techniques such as belly breathing in a clinical setting. This book provides parents with the tools to collaboratively learn and practice the skills with their children. Involving parents in a child's treatment, a principle similar to filial therapy, turns out to aid healing (Bratton, Ray, Rhine, & Jones, 2005). The involvement of multiple members will likely affect the family's ability to cope with stress, and may therefore provide greater and longer lasting results. A potential byproduct of adult involvement in mindfulness instruction is decreased parental stress; parents learn the skills right along with their offspring.

The Program

The book starts with context and background established following the events of 911 in New York City area schools. The author describes how teachers led children to safety through staying calm themselves, in what the author refers to as inner preparedness. The early reflections of teachers' actions were meant to illustrate that often academic preparedness should take a "back seat to a child's inner preparedness," and in fact recent research indicates that students perform better academically when instruction is supplemented by SEL. Lantieri stresses the importance of collaboration in emotional development.

Chapter 2 introduces the first two teachable stress reduction skills, progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness. The author highlights the importance of patience, and advises readers to expect two weeks of practice before the parent/teacher/child might experience results. In addition, the author offers a preview of the journey, effectively breaking down each guiding principle. Lantieri describes the process of preparing children for rituals and routines introduced in the lessons.

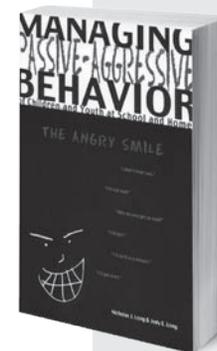


Reclaiming Youth at Risk

This updated edition of the classic draws on early youth-work pioneers, Native tribal wisdom, and youth development research and outlines the four essential elements every child needs in order to flourish and thrive: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. The book includes innovative approaches for building relationships with youth, fostering their self-esteem, and instilling positive values in classroom, residential treatment, counseling, and correctional settings. The Circle of Courage model has been adopted by hundreds of schools and programs in the U.S., Canada, and around the world. A "must-read" for everyone who works with youth. Foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Written by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg and Steve Van Bockern.

Managing Passive-Aggressive Behavior

This is the first comprehensive, insightful, and realistic description about how to manage passive aggressive students in the school and family. Written by Nicholas J. Long and Jody E. Long, this is a breakthrough book for all parents, teachers and counselors who have to live with, teach, and survive these students.

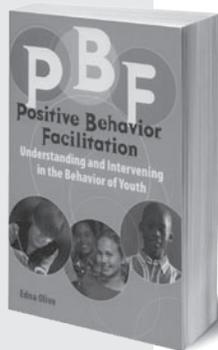


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Positive Behavior Facilitation

This book challenges traditional models of discipline and control by providing school staff and adults who work with youth with new ways of supporting and encouraging youth to meet their needs with self-supporting rather than self-defeating behaviors. The author provides details on how to use six PBF tools—practical and functional strategies necessary in order to comprehensively understand and effectively intervene in behavior. The PBF approach helps adults examine how they interact with youth, better understand children's behavior, and use effective interventions to help facilitate behavior change. By Edna Olive.



Lantieri (2008) argues, "When children construct their own knowledge through such hands-on play, what they learn is often more fully integrated into their lives, and becomes the building blocks for further learning and mastery." This notion supports that SEL practices, integrated into daily life, will enhance children's ability to reduce stress. Research has shown that such practices not only reduce stress but serve as an immune enhancer (Bernard, 2004).

Chapters three, four and five are organized by age, providing the reader a more streamlined approach to the text. The author provides age appropriate activities to support the initial teachable strategies of progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness training. Each chapter provides the following preparatory elements:

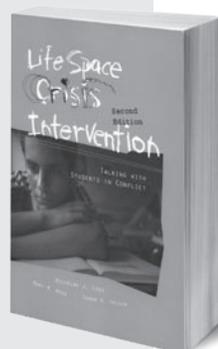
- Introduction to the session
- Items needed
- The time frame for each activity
- Concepts and skills [to be] learned
- Helpful tips for parents to remember

How to incorporate the CD

Beginning counselors will particularly value the cognitive/behavioral format which provides ready-to-use worksheets. In addition, Lantieri provides a brief description of developmental issues affecting each age group. This provides a practical understanding for beginning counselors and parents on how best to incorporate the lessons with the developmental tasks appropriate for each age group.

Life Space Crisis Intervention

Life Space Crisis Intervention is about talking with children and youth who are in crisis. It requires no props or equipment, only a skilled and understanding adult. This book teaches verbal strategies that are essential for crisis management. Any crisis handled well can lead to positive, long-lasting change. By Nicholas J. Long, Mary M. Wood and Frank A. Fecser.



Building Emotional Intelligence comes with an approximately one-hour audio compact disc. The audio sequence is divided into five parts that build from one skill level to the next. The narrator has a pleasing voice that children and adults will both enjoy, and the commentaries are creative and thoughtful. If nothing else, these 5 to 15 minute quiet times should make a pleasing interlude in the incessant, mediated raucousness experienced by today's children. Once they acclimate to the quiet periods (teachers or parents will need to work on this), children will ask for the narrations over and over again.

The first section deals with what in years past would be called progressive relaxation. The narrator asks listeners to attend to divergent body parts as they learn to discriminate between muscle tension and relaxation. As one might guess, this is a recurring theme in the audio sequences (picked up again in section three).

Another theme established in the audio disc is "mindfulness." Mindfulness refers to the combination of calmness and attention.

The notion is that children benefit from the Zen attitude of deep attention to the now, while ratcheting down the emotional (that is, physical) responses to sensory surround. Children will benefit from these guided lessons, teaching that not every sensory stimulus deserves immediate attention at the expense of other, perhaps more important, life events.

Call 1-888-647-2532 to order.

Online

These books and more are available for purchase online at:

www.reclaimingbooks.com

By Phone

You can also purchase these resources by calling Circle of Courage toll-free at:

1-888-647-2532

Summary

The chapters offer a reader-friendly approach that educators, beginning counselors/marriage and family therapists, and teachers can follow. Lantieri does a nice job of breaking down each technique and aligning it with the corresponding tracks on the audio CD, providing for a very user-friendly approach. The author includes ancillary materials, beyond examples listed in the chapter, which the readers could utilize with their children. Building Emotional Intelligence would make a great addition to the child development libraries of parents, counselors and educators.

Ordering the Book

Linda Lantieri's new book, *Building Emotional Intelligence*, and many other resources are available in the Reclaiming Youth Library. Visit us online at www.reclaiming.com, email bookstore@reclaiming.com, or call toll-free 888.647.2532 (outside the United States and Canada 605.647.2532).

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