

# Integrating Practical Applications of Emotional Intelligence Skills: In the Emotional Intelligence Curriculum



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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to provide students with evidenced-based practical tips through Thomas et al.'s Emotional Intelligence Curriculum (EIC) that will facilitate the transferability of emotional intelligence skills to fieldwork and practice (2018). Two practical tip videos were created and shown to participants, demonstrating two EIC concepts: establishing professional boundaries with clients and supervisors and managing emotions in clinical situations. Based on data from pre-and post-test surveys, after viewing practical tip videos, participants demonstrated an increased understanding of EI concepts and transferability to clinical situations. Participants reported higher confidence in implementing professional boundaries, handling disagreements, and managing body language and facial expressions. Participants rated emotional management strategies as most beneficial and transferable, such as box breathing and reframing the situation.

## BACKGROUND

### What is EI?

Emotional intelligence, defined as professionalism, empathy, and integrity, aids in coping with environmental demands related to motivation, emotions, and relationships (Talarico et al., 2013, Drame et al., 2021).

### The Importance of EI in Healthcare

Through training and development of EI skills, occupational therapy (OT) students can better assess their skills, decrease burnout, manage emotions for improved problem-solving in clinical situations, better connect with clients, and establish client-centered goals (Andonian, 2013).

### Transferability regarding practical tips

Kaiafas et al. introduced mock interprofessional scenarios and after each, provided practical tips for applying learned coping mechanisms, thereby simplifying EI skills for better understanding in high-stress situations (2021).

Gribble et al. and Polonio-López et al. found that implementing practical EI skills training increased OT students' self-perception, decision-making, and emotional awareness (2017, 2019).

## OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To assess the efficacy of adding practical tip videos to the Emotional Intelligence Curriculum (EIC).
- ❖ To develop pre and post-test surveys that assess self-perceived EI after watching the practical tip videos.
- ❖ To test the hypothesis that students' ability to understand and transfer learned EI skills would significantly increase after EIC practical tip video exposure.

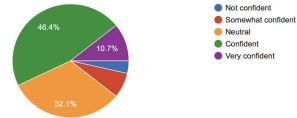
## FINDINGS

Survey Question	Pearson's r (df=26)	p-value
Knowledge of EI	.630	0.01
Practicing EI	.516	0.05
Practical and role play videos	.583	0.01
Maintaining boundaries	.896	0.01
Handling disagreements	.877	0.01
Sharing personal information	.790	0.01
Body language awareness	.783	0.01
Expressing emotions	.862	0.01
Coping strategies	.890	0.01

All correlations are significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

How confident are you in setting and maintaining boundaries with others in a professional setting? Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being not confident, and 5 being extremely confident.

Pre-Test Figure 4.



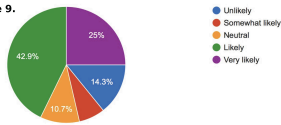
After watching the supplemental practical tip video Friendly But Not Friends, how confident do you feel to successfully implement and maintain profess... being not confident, and 5 being very confident.

Post-Test Figure 4



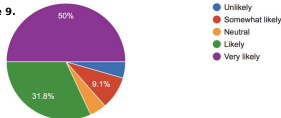
When overwhelmed, how likely are you to use coping strategies such as journaling, meditative breathing and reframing the situation? Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being unlikely, and 5 being very likely.

Pre-Test Figure 9.



After watching the supplemental practical tip video Emotional Management, when overwhelmed, how likely are you to use coping strategies such as jo...le of 1-5, 1 being unlikely, and 5 being very likely.

Post-Test Figure 9.



## PARTICIPANTS

SUNY Downstate OT students who began in May of 2022 and are expected to graduate in December 2024 participated in this study. A sample size of 22 participants was used for data analysis as 28 students completed the pre-test survey, and only 22 completed the post-test survey.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Pre-test and post-test survey data were collected and analyzed. Practical tip videos were then edited to reflect students' feedback. Pre/post-test surveys were administered via Google surveys to create quantitative analyses using pie graphs. SPSS was used to calculate P-values to determine statistical significance.

## METHODOLOGY

Scripts for practical tip videos were developed and recorded using mock clinical scenarios. Before and after engaging in the EIC videos, participants completed the pre and post-test survey with open-ended and Likert-scale-based questions in a Level I Fieldwork course. Participants engaged in the EIC videos, followed by their supplemental practical tip videos and discussion.

## DISCUSSION

Viewing practical tip videos caused a significant increase in participant understanding of these 3 EI related areas:

- ❖ General EI knowledge and awareness
- ❖ Professional Boundaries: implementing and maintaining boundaries (Figures 1 & 2), handling disagreements, sharing personal information
- ❖ Emotional Management: body language awareness, expressing emotions, coping strategies (journaling, reframing the situation, box breathing)(Figures 3 & 4)

## IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research advances OT education by providing students with practical EI tips that can easily transfer into Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences. The project emphasizes the importance of having transferable EI skills to enhance practitioner competency and confidence, strengthen client-centered care, and ensure a smooth transition from academic settings to practice. This offers a roadmap for educators and practitioners to optimize educational strategies to foster the development of emotionally intelligent, competent OTs.

## REFERENCES



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