**Do you understand your emotions?**

You always hear that “communication is rule number 1” when it comes to Polyamorous relationships. Some time we fail to communicate our true emotions and expect our partners to know what we mean by certain actions or non-actions that we might display. In other instances we tend to misrepresent our emotional output because within ourselves we might not have a clear understanding of why we are feeling a certain emotion. Ask yourself, do you feel emotionally literate and are you delivering your emotions clearly and precise?

“Intro to topic: Emotional Literacy”

* Polyamory and emotional literacy | Kel Walters | TEDxUTA 5:36 video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3q3WOrs8kAM>

* What could be wrong with monogamy? Marc de Hond at TEDxEde 11:29 video (optional)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aKPy1SvYPs>

* Emotional Check-Ins
* Think about why you’re feeling what you feel
* Emotional Literacy by definition: Emotional Literacy is made up of ‘the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathize with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively. To be emotionally literate is to be able to handle emotions in a way that improves your personal power and improves the quality of life around you.

Questions for discussion:

1. To be poly is emotional literacy a must?
2. In your poly dynamic do you have an emotional check-in? With yourself or with your partners?
3. What do you think hinders individuals from being emotionally literate?

**Emotional Literacy**

<http://eqi.org/elit.htm?hc_location=ufi>

Emotional Intimacy in Polyamorous Relationships

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-polyamorists-next-door/201309/emotional-intimacy-in-polyamorous-relationships-1?hc_location=ufi>

Jealousy and insecurity

<https://www.morethantwo.com/jealousy-insecurity.html>

Communication in Relationships

<https://www.morethantwo.com/communication.html>

Common mistakes in poly relationships

<https://www.morethantwo.com/polymistakes.html?hc_location=ufi>

Questions for discussion:

1. Is Jealousy a bad thing? Can we rid ourselves of it completely?
2. How do you deal with jealousy?
3. What ideas help build the foundation of healthy relationships?

# Emotional Literacy Tactics

**(Print for attendees if possible)**

Emotional Literacy tactics:

-If you are interested in working on your emotional literacy, the first step is to start using simple, three word sentences such as these:

“I feel sad. I feel motivated. I feel offended. I feel appreciated. I feel hurt. I feel disrespected.”

This may feel strange at first, since not many people do this. But it gets easier with time, and as you find other people who you can share your true feelings with.

**Examples of Emotional Literacy**

I feel....

* Criticized
* Unimportant
* Disrespected
* Bored

Examples of What is NOT Emotional Literacy

* I feel like....
* I feel that...
* I feel like you.... (This is a "you message" in disguise. See below)

**I messages vs You Messages**

When we talk about our feelings using three word sentences we are sending what have been called ***"I messages".*** On the other hand when we say things like "***You make me so jealous"*** we are sending a ***"you message"***. These "*you messages*" typically put the other person on the **defensive**, which hurts communication and relationships rather than helping.

**\*Note** that when we say something similar to ***"I feel like you..."*** we are sending a "*you message*" in disguise as an "*I message"!*

**Making Predictions vs. Expressing Feelings**

You are going to fall. **VS**  I am afraid you are going to fall.

We are going to miss the train. **VS** I am afraid we are going to miss the train.

It is important to express feelings instead of making predictions.

After we learn to find the right word for our feeling and its intensity, the next step is explaining why we feel what we feel. At this point, our analytical brain is called into action. We actually make things much easier on ourselves and others when our language is clear, direct, and precise. When our words and our non-verbal communication is consistent, we gain respect because we come across as having integrity. Clear, honest communication is not only helpful in personal relationships, but essential to a society. We are simply all better off when we all follow the old rule: Say what you mean and mean what you say.