



Reimagine Emotional Learning Across Xenocultures (RELAX)

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Youth Exchange Toolkit

Everyone has emotions. No emotion is wrong.



Understanding Emotions

Emotions are your inner messages — they shape how you think, feel, and act.

Everyone has emotions. No emotion is wrong.

The 6 Basic Emotions



Joy

Light, warm, happy

"This is good — enjoy it!"



Sadness

Heavy, slow, tearful

"I lost something important."



Anger

Hot, tense, frustrated

"Something feels unfair."



Fear

Cold, frozen, alert

"Be careful — danger ahead!"



Surprise

Sudden, wide-eyed

"Something unexpected!"



Disgust

Uncomfortable, pulling away

"This feels wrong or bad."

No emotion is "bad" — every emotion has a purpose and a message.

How to Recognise Your Emotions

1



PAUSE

Stop for a moment before reacting. Take a breath.

2



NAME IT

Ask yourself: "What am I feeling right now?"

3



FEEL IT

Allow the emotion to be there without judgment.



Key Takeaway

*Emotions are not problems
to solve.*

*They are information
to understand.*

Emotional awareness is a skill — practise it every day.



COLOURS OF EMOTIONS

RELAX Youth Exchange Activity Session

1 Emotion–Colour Mapping

2 My Colour Today

3–4 Cross-Cultural

5 Colour Conversation

6 Paint the Music

7 Emotion Palette

8 Emotion Landscape

9 Emotion Wheel

Draw · Paint · Reflect · Connect



Activity 1 — Emotion–Colour Mapping

🕒 10 min

Think of an emotion. Choose a colour. No words — only colour.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Write the 7 emotions on the flipchart
2. Give each participant paper + colours
3. Assign ONE colour per emotion
4. Do NOT write the emotion name —
only apply colour to the page
5. Share and compare with the group

💬 Facilitator Questions

- Did anyone use the same colour for different emotions?
- Did some emotions mix or clash?
- How do emotions overlap in real life?

📄 Write These on the Flipchart

 Joy

 Calm

 Sadness

 Hope

 Anger

 Stress

 Fear

← Participants colour-match each emotion on their own paper — no words written



Activity 2 — My Colour Today

A wordless check-in. Colour speaks first.

5 min

Step 1

Pick Your Colour

Choose ONE colour that describes how you are feeling right now.

Don't overthink it.
Your first instinct is right.

Step 2

Don't Say a Word

Hold up your colour.
Or make a mark on your paper.

No explaining.
No justifying.
Silence is the rule.

Step 3

Find Your Match

Walk around the room.
Find someone with the SAME colour.

Ask them:
"Are we feeling the same way?"

Debrief: Were you feeling the same as your colour-match? What surprised you?

No words — only colour



Activities 3 & 4 — Colours Across Cultures + The National Palette

How do different countries use colour to express emotion?

🕒 15 min

🌍 Activity 3 — Colours Across Cultures

Ask the group:

"What colour represents 😞 Sadness in your country?"

"What colour represents ⚠️ Danger in your country?"

"What colour represents 🎉 Celebration in your country?"

"What colour represents ❤️ Love in your country?"

⚡ **White = mourning in some cultures, joy in others.
The answers will differ — sometimes dramatically.**

🇳🇵 Activity 4 — The National Palette

Each participant uses colours from their national flag and assigns an emotion to each colour.

"In my country, red means..."

DE Germany

Red = ?

Gold = ?

Black = ?

NG Nigeria

Green = ?

White = ?

FR France

Blue = ?

White = ?

Red = ?

Builds cross-cultural empathy and genuine curiosity.



Activity 5 — The Colour Conversation

🕒 10 min

Two participants. One page. No talking. Only colour marks.

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Pair up — two participants share ONE page
- 2 Person A makes a colour mark — any mark. No talking.
- 3 Person B responds with their own colour mark
- 4 Keep going back and forth for 5 minutes
- 5 The page becomes your visual dialogue together

 **THE RULE: No talking. Only colour marks.**

🕒 Debrief Questions

→ *Did the conversation feel harmonious — or tense?*

→ *Who led? Who followed?*

→ *Did your marks grow bigger or smaller?*

→ *Was there a moment you felt understood?*

→ *What would you say if words were allowed?*

→ *What surprised you about your partner?*

The page becomes a visual dialogue — no words needed



Activity 6 — Paint the Music

🕒 15 min

Let sound guide your brush. Paint what you hear, not what you see.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Play a piece of music — 2 to 3 minutes
2. Participants paint whatever the music brings up:

Colour · Shape · Movement · Feeling

3. No planning. No thinking. Just respond.
4. Change the music — fresh area of the page
5. Compare how different music creates different marks



Try:

Classical · Jazz · Ambient · African Drums · Upbeat Pop

Calm Music

Blues, greens,
soft purples.
Slow flowing marks.

Intense Music

Reds, oranges, blacks.
Bold, jagged,
urgent marks.

Joyful Music

Yellows, bright pinks.
Circles, bursts, dots.
Upward energy.

No planning. No thinking. Let the music move the brush.



The Emotion Palette

🕒 15 min

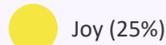
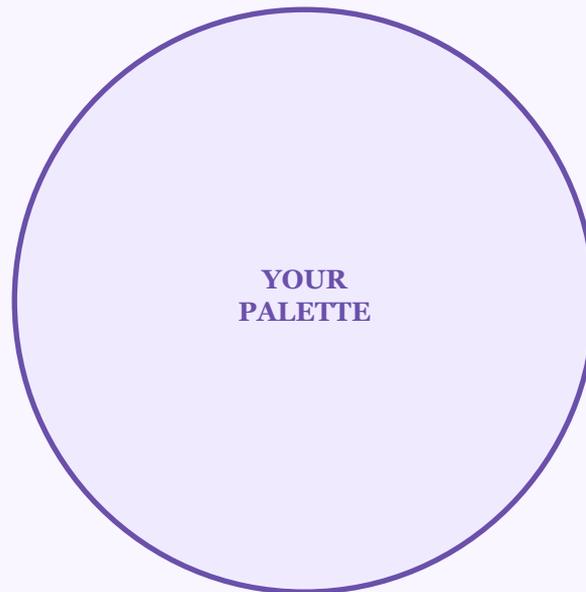
Draw your day as a circle of colours. How large was each emotion?

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Draw a large circle on your page
- 2 Divide it into segments — like a pie chart
- 3 Each segment = one emotion felt today
- 4 Fill each segment with its matching colour
- 5 The **SIZE** of the segment = how much space that emotion took up today.
- 6 Share and compare with the group

No two palettes will look the same — and that is the point.

Example — what it might look like:



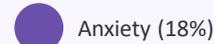
Joy (25%)



Anger (10%)



Calm (20%)



Anxiety (18%)

The size of the segment = how much space that emotion took this week



Activity 8 — The Emotion Landscape

🕒 20 min

Paint an abstract landscape that gives you joy, inner peace, or makes you smile.

Paint a natural landscape — not from memory, but from feeling. Let colour lead, not skill.

Elements to Paint

- Mountains or hills
- Weather — sun, cloud, rain, storm
- Water — ocean, river, still lake
- Sky — dawn, dusk, night, midday
- Terrain — grass, rock, sand, earth

→ *Light — where is it coming from?*

Mindful Prompts

- Be mindful of every colour you choose
- How calm or rough is your water?
- What is the weather doing right now?
- What time of day does it feel like?
- There is no wrong answer here

→ *No art skill required — only intention*

Debrief Questions

- What colours came up most?
- Was your landscape calm or dramatic?
- What does it say about your inner state?
- Did anyone paint a similar landscape?
- What would you change?

→ *The interpretation is everything.*

No art skill required. The interpretation is everything.



Activity 9 — The Emotion Wheel

🕒 15 min

Map the full spectrum — where do your emotions sit today?

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Draw a large circle on your page
- 2 Divide it into 6 equal sections
- 3 Label each section with a core emotion:
Joy · Sadness · Anger · Fear · Calm · Hope
- 4 Build OUTWARD in rings:
e.g. Annoyed → Angry → Furious
- 5 Deeper colour = more intense version
- 6 Mark where YOU are right now with a dot 🌟

The wheel grows richer the more emotions you add.

Core Emotion → Growing in Intensity →



Deeper colour = more intense version of the emotion

Session Overview

Colours of Emotions · Youth Exchange Activity Session

1 Emotion–Colour Mapping

10 min

2 My Colour Today

5 min

3 Colours Across Cultures

10 min

4 The National Palette

5 min

5 The Colour Conversation

10 min

6 Paint the Music

15 min

7 The Emotion Palette

15 min

8 The Emotion Landscape

20 min

9 The Emotion Wheel

15 min

 **Total: approx. 105 minutes** · Split across two sessions or adapt as needed

Materials:

- Watercolours or acrylic paint
- Coloured pencils / pastels
- Large paper (A3 or bigger)
- Brushes, water, mixing palette
- Music player + speakers

*"Colour is a power which directly influences the soul."
— Wassily Kandinsky*



CIRCLE OF CONTROL & INFLUENCE

A reflective activity for understanding what we can and cannot control

 **Control**

What you can directly change

 **Influence**

What you can shape but not own

 **Concern**

What you care about but cannot change

Based on Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People



The Three Circles

Understanding where to place your energy makes all the difference.

🕒 5 min

CONTROL

Inner Circle

Things you can DIRECTLY change through your own actions.

- Your attitude and mindset
- Your words and tone
- Your effort and focus
- Your choices and reactions
- How you treat others
- What you do with your time

This is your power zone.

INFLUENCE

Middle Circle

Things you cannot control, but can shape through your actions.

- The atmosphere in the group
- How others feel about you
- Friendships and trust
- The mood of a session
- Team outcomes
- Your environment

You have a voice here — use it.

CONCERN

Outer Circle

Things you care about but cannot control or influence directly.

- Other people's decisions
- World events and the news
- The weather
- The past
- What others think of you
- Political situations

Energy here drains you.



The Key Insight

Not everything that worries us is something we can change.

Reactive Focus

Spending most energy in the OUTER CIRCLE

- Worrying about things you cannot change
- Blaming others for how you feel
- Waiting for the world to be different
- Feeling helpless and frustrated
- **Your inner circle SHRINKS over time**
- **Less energy. Less agency. Less joy.**

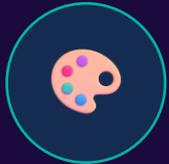
VS

Proactive Focus

Spending most energy in the INNER CIRCLE

- ✓ Focusing on what you can actually do
- ✓ Taking responsibility for your reactions
- ✓ Acting on your values regardless of others
- ✓ Building resilience step by step
- ✓ **Your inner circle GROWS over time**
- ✓ **More energy. More agency. More joy.**

Proactive people focus on what they can control — and their circle of influence grows



Drawing Activity — Fill Your Circles

🕒 15 min

Use colour, words, and symbols to map your own circles.

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Take your worksheet — three blank circles are waiting
- 2 Think about something in your life right now that is on your mind
- 3 In the INNER circle — write or draw what you CAN control: your attitude, your effort, your words, your choices
- 4 In the MIDDLE circle — write what you can INFLUENCE: relationships, group energy, your environment
- 5 In the OUTER circle — write what you CANNOT control: other people, the news, the past, world events
- 6 Now add COLOUR — choose a colour for each circle and fill it in

There are no right or wrong answers — only honest ones.

🎨 Colour Guide (suggested)

	Inner — CONTROL	<i>Blue — calm, focused, grounded</i>
	Middle — INFLUENCE	<i>Gold — warm, relational, dynamic</i>
	Outer — CONCERN	<i>Pink/Red — let it fade, let it go</i>

💡 Facilitator Questions

- *Which circle has the most things in it?*
- *Which circle takes up most of your energy?*
- *What would change if you focused on your inner circle?*
- *Is there anything in Concern that belongs in Influence?*
- *What is ONE thing you can act on today?*

Use colour and symbols — not just words. Let the page do the thinking.



Share & Reflect

🕒 10 min

What did you discover? You never have to share more than you choose to.

1

What's in your inner circle?

Share ONE thing you wrote in your control circle. Why did you put it there?

2

What's in your influence circle?

Share something you can influence — and one small action you could take.

3

What's in your concern circle?

Share something that worries you but is outside your control. How does holding it feel?

4

What will you do differently?

Based on your circles — what is one thing you want to shift energy away from, and one thing toward?

🗨️ **Ground Rules:** Share only what you feel comfortable with · Listen without judgement · What is shared here, stays here

Every person's circles look different — and that is exactly right

You cannot control the wind.

But you can adjust your sails.

- Your energy is precious — spend it where it counts.
- You have more influence than you think.
- Let the outer circle be what it is.
- Return to your inner circle. Again and again.

What is ONE thing you will focus on this week?



What would you like to be remembered for?

A Group Mural Activity

THINK



What do you want people to say about you when you are gone? What words, feelings, or images come to mind?

CREATE



Paint your answer on the shared mural. Use colour, symbol, and shape — not just words. Let your brushstroke speak.

SHARE



Stand in front of your piece. Tell the group what you painted and why. One minute. Your words. Your legacy.