

# Wisdom Projects, Inc.



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## Top Areas of Concern for Restorative Practices and Mindfulness

The *Baltimore Wisdom Project* (BWP) is one of two main divisions of *Wisdom Projects, Inc.*, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. The BWP helps children and adults enhance their behavioral health and forge caring communities. We offer education, training, and professional development within Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), restorative practices, and mindfulness. This document presents the BWP's top areas of concern for SEL, restorative practices, and mindfulness and the specific measures on which we focus within our education, training, and professional development.

### 1. Actualizing Peace

**Peace** is the highest, nonviolent state of compassion and contemplation. The following measures elevate peace:

- Impulse control.
- Emotional regulation.
- Anger management.
- Bodily autonomy, release, and relaxation.
- Nonviolent communication and expression.
- De-escalation measures.
- Accountability measures (see below).
- Bullying prevention.

### 2. Actualizing Affirmation

**Affirmation** involves the creation and reification of continually positive, encouraging expression, systems, and practices. It is the operationalization of empathy. The following measures elevate affirmation:

- Ten forms of expressive affirmation: encouraging; motivating; supporting; inspiring; consoling; helping; praising; gifting; validating; and protecting.
- Eliminating stereotype threat (or the adoption of negative self-understanding).
- Eliminating learned helplessness (or the inability to act or care for self or others).

- Elevating healthy expression of feelings through affect statements and questions (verbal prompts that foreground sensitivity to the emotional impact of actions).

### 3. Actualizing Accountability

**Accountability** is the root of conflict transformation. It involves identifying types of pain and/or suffering to carry out the most effective measures to eliminate and ameliorate that pain; taking active, deliberative responsibility for offense; stopping harm and offense; learning measures to never harm or offend again; identifying and practicing rehabilitative measures for those who harm; fostering forgiveness and letting go; creating systems (policies and procedures) for transforming conflict; elevating safety and security without harming anyone; elevating the needs of victims and/or survivors; making amends; making agreements; and fostering renewed healthy relationships that restore communities. The following measures elevate accountability:

- Identifying and differentiating between six forms of pain and suffering.
- Truth telling without defense or offense to create space for reconciliation.
- Conflict transformation and reconciliation processes that systemize accountability.
- Actualizing natural versus imposed consequences.
- Becoming an advocate and an advisor who bears witness to the impact of harm.
- Systemizing de-escalation measures: Learning to “high road” and “let go” to open pathways to forgiveness.
- Healing: trauma-informed care and trauma responsiveness.
- Circles: circles involve gathering equitably—facing each other—to share feelings, share facts, and transform conflicts.
- Conferencing: conferencing involves (1) group or individual counseling that give space and time to work through conflicts and elevate healing; and (2) advanced circles that restore and reify communities to share feelings, manage conflicts, make agreements, and make amends.

### 4. Modeling.

**Modeling** is a key element within forging integrated “whole” communities. It refers to the capacity of leaders (such as teachers or staff) to embody the good behavioral health that is valued within the culture. Ultimately, modeling means exemplifying the best of what we can and should be as we care for others. The following measures elevate modeling:

- Active listening.
- Community counseling (blending aspects of mainline cognitive behavioral therapy, trauma-informed care, and crisis management).
- Conscious mentoring (becoming a navigator that helps others flow well within and outside of the community).
- Truth-telling.
- Fostering fairness for all.

- Representing: embodying responsibility for others in the community.
- Character development techniques.
- Personality transformation techniques.

## 5. Empathy Building

Empathy fosters interdependence between self and others. It represents the full gamut of how we care for others as they wish to be treated and with full acceptance of their differences and uniqueness. The following measures elevate empathy:

- Team-building/collaboration-building.
- Trust-building.
- Fostering equity (being fair while accounting for disadvantage).
- Fostering justice (ensuring accountability, rehabilitation, and making amends).
- Eliminating competitiveness.
- Verbal prompts
  - Promote responsibility for others (“We do this because we’re in this together!”).
  - Amplify interdependence (“We can do it if we do it together”).
  - Directly express compassion and affirmation (“I care about you!).
  - Link advisement to care for others (“Because we care about them!”).
  - Elevate curiosity in others’ uniqueness (What’s great about them?).
  - Continually re-enforce empathy by linking empathetic prompts with advice, directives and corrections.

## 6. Creating Calm

**Calm** is the flowing, ongoing state of serenity required for compassion and contemplation. This area overlaps with peace. Along with the measures listed below, see those listed above for peace.

- Insight meditation: learning to see things as they truly are in the present moment rather than assuming, presuming, or projecting.
- Loving-kindness meditation: learning to identify and foster care for others in one’s mind as a platform for engaging with them compassionately.
- Breath patterning: learning to regulate and de-escalate inhalations and exhalations of the breath.

## 7. Fostering Focus

**Focus** is heightened attention that brings great clarity by pinpointing the center or the height of importance. This area overlaps with peace. Along with the measures listed below, see those listed above for peace. Focus is the root of critical thought.

- Build situational discernment: decide when to and when not to act.
- Build purpose: inventory and classify for specific goals and outcomes.
- Present-moment-situating: learning to be present for self and others at specific times.
- Mnemonic techniques: memory-enhancing techniques.
- Classifying and ranking.
- Structuring, analyzing, and synthesizing.

### Note on Adult Learning for Professional Development

When working with adults, the BWP offers professional development that models the understanding of andragogy (or adult learning) espoused in the chart below.

#### Pedagogy vs. Andragogy

	<b>Pedagogical</b>	<b>Andragogical</b>
The Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learner is dependent upon the instructor for all learning</li> <li>• The teacher/instructor assumes full responsibility for what is taught and how it is learned</li> <li>• The teacher/instructor evaluates learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learner is self-directed</li> <li>• The learner is responsible for his/her own learning</li> <li>• Self-evaluation is characteristic of this approach</li> </ul>
Role of the Learner's Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learner comes to the activity with little experience that could be tapped as a resource for learning</li> <li>• The experience of the instructor is most influential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learner brings a greater volume and quality of experience</li> <li>• Adults are a rich resource for one another</li> <li>• Different experiences assure diversity in groups of adults</li> <li>• Experience becomes the source of self-identify</li> </ul>
Readiness to Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are told what they have to learn in order to advance to the next level of mastery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any change is likely to trigger a readiness to learn</li> <li>• The need to know in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of one's life is important</li> <li>• Ability to assess gaps between where one is now and where one wants and needs to be</li> </ul>
Orientation to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning is a process of acquiring prescribed subject matter</li> <li>• Content units are sequenced according to the logic of the subject matter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners want to perform a task, solve a problem, live in a more satisfying way</li> <li>• Learning must have relevance to real-life tasks</li> <li>• Learning is organized around life/work situations rather than subject matter units</li> </ul>
Motivation for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily motivated by external pressures, competition for grades, and the consequences of failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal motivators: self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, self-confidence, self-actualization</li> </ul>