CONVERSATION TREE

Skills: This activity has the potential to develop and enhance student's emotional literacy, emotional regulation, social awareness, feelings of connection, empathy, and self-expression.

Incorporates: SFBC and CBT   **Materials:** Tree poster

Considerations
- This versatile tool can be used in individual, group, classroom lessons, journaling prompts, and more!
- When discussing the figures avoid assigning a gender (unless the student assigns a gender in an individual session). If students begin to assign gender to a specific figure it can prohibit students from selecting figures. You don't need to correct students when they assign gender, just lead by example.
- Be considerate of student development. While students as young as five may be able to relate to the images others may struggle to understand.
- After a student identifies a figure ask them to tell you more about their choice. Allow students to assign emotions or feelings to the figures they select. While you may see an image as sad, happy, excited, etc. the student may be relating it to a different emotion.

Potential Discussion Questions:
- Which figure best represents you today?
- Which figure looks happiest to you? Why?
- Which figure do you want to be in the illustration? Why?
- Which figure looks like you on a bad day? (When you are at your worst).
- Which figure looks like you when you are at your best? (Or having a good day).
- Do any of the figures in this tree make you think of someone you know?
- Who would you want to be friends with?
- Which figure do you feel the least like?
- Which figure represents how you feel _____ (when taking a test, at school, at home, in Algebra, etc.)?
- Which figure reminds you of how you were __ years ago?
- Which figure do you want to be in the future?
- Which figure looks like they need help? When do you feel this way?
- Which figure represents how it feels to be ... Bullied? Left out? Teased? Encouraged? Included?

Possible Questions for Classroom Integration:
- Which figure represents how you feel right now about *the new unit/skill/concept* we are learning?
- Which figure do you think represents how the main character of our book is feeling?
- Which figure do you think represents how you feel when we do *group projects/public speaking/unit assessments*?

Staff Development: Introduce this tool to teachers at a staff meeting. Project the tree or give teachers a hard copy. Select a few questions from the list above (to build connections/enhance wellness) and/or consider some of the school staff specific questions below...
- Think of a student in your classroom that you are concerned about. Which figure best represents them? Why?
- Which figure represents how you want students to feel in your classroom? What strategies do you use to create an classroom environment that promotes this?
- Can you think of any ways you could use this with students? Parents?

Final Note: I have found that students naturally gravitate to the poster and enjoy looking at the different images displayed. This tree can be an excellent way to make connections in a group or assess a student's emotional literacy skills. You can use it to discuss behavior and set goals. I have also used it a tool to measure progress. For example, a new student may select a different figure on their first day versus their tenth day of school. Don't be afraid to let students lead the way with this, they often relate to the images in ways we wouldn't consider.

Inspired by the Blob Tree (blobtree.com)