

# **Youth Empowerment and Self-Discovery Through Emotional CPR in Schools**

**Sean Perry & Felicity Therese Krueger**

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# Meet Your Speakers: Sean Perry

Sean Perry has two decades of coaching experience and working with youth. He ran two residential treatment centers for mental health and observed firsthand that mental health care was supporting “the haves” rather than the “have nots” more than anyone would like to admit. The lack of equality in mental health support services pushed Sean to create We R H.O.P.E. Inc. We R H.O.P.E. hopes to create change in mental health by bringing mental health support at a much younger age and breaking the stigma of mental illness at the school and community level. Sean is the President and Co-Founder of We R H.O.P.E. Sean is a certified Life Coach, Cognitive Behavioral Coach, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Specialist/Instructor, certified in Childhood Trauma, Exposure Response Prevention Specialist, Signs of Suicide Prevention trainer, trained in collaborative problem solving, international trainer in Emotional CPR, and one of the curriculum writers and trainers for Youth eCPR and the first to bring Youth eCPR to a school setting.



[Image description: A black and white image of a Black man in business attire smiling widely in black background.]

# Meet Your Speakers: Felicity Therese Krueger

Felicity Therese Krueger (she/her) is an 18-year old youth leader. She is a member of Kentucky Youth MOVE, Youth Best Practice Committee and is a Kentucky youth ambassador. She has worked in the advocacy realm since she was 11 years old starting with following her mom to the capital. She is currently working on several projects to better help youth struggling with mental health or are in the foster care/adoption system. She spends her summers working as a camp counselor and hopes to go to college to fulfill her dreams of becoming a social worker



[Image description: Brick background with bushes and a young female with shoulder length brown hair in a black top and light brown pants sitting on a step.]

# What is Emotional CPR?

Emotional CPR (eCPR) is a program and practice developed by persons with a lived experience of recovery from trauma or mental health challenges to train community members from diverse backgrounds to support others through mental health crises.



[Image description: Colorful painting featuring different sized hearts and stars, with a large dark purple heart on one side and a large yellow heart on the other.]



# What Does That Look Like in Schools?

Young people can learn about the Youth Emotional CPR (“Youth eCPR”) in schools.

Youth eCPR is a version of eCPR that is geared toward youth. This practice allows youth to learn about and train in the eCPR modality just as adults would. It also prepares young people to train other youth from perspectives based in peer values.



# What Does C,P and R Mean?

There are three phases to the practice of eCPR.

**C** = Connect with Compassion and Concern to open up Communication, especially heart-to-heart

**P** = emPower to experience Passion and Purpose

**R** = Revitalize increased energy, new life, creativity, hope, interest in people

# Why is eCPR Necessary for Our Youth in Today's Culture?

“Today’s generation of young people are unprecedented and uniquely hard to navigate. And the effect these challenges have had on their mental health is devastating.

Recent national surveys of young people have shown alarming increases in the prevalence of certain mental health challenges—in 2019, one in three high school students and half of female students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, an overall increase of 40% from 2009. We know that mental health is shaped by many factors, from our genes and brain chemistry to our relationships with family and friends, neighborhood conditions, and larger social forces and policies. We also know that, too often, young people are bombarded with messages through the media and popular culture that erode their sense of self-worth—telling them they are not good looking enough, popular enough, smart enough, or rich enough. That comes as progress on legitimate, and distressing, issues like climate change, income inequality, racial injustice, the opioid epidemic, and gun violence feels too slow.”



# **Why is eCPR Necessary for Our Youth in Today's Culture?**

Some young people are emotionally driven while others are completely disconnected from their emotions. Some youth are told that expressing emotions is unhealthy or unnecessary. Some youth may not even know what they are feeling.

Youth eCPR allows youth to connect through feelings first, holding space for youth to truly identify what they are feeling and experience it in a healthy and controlled environment. This allows them to connect not only with themselves but others in a raw and authentic way.

## **Why is eCPR Necessary for Our Youth in Today's Culture?**

Trauma impacts us all.

The experience of human disconnection, a separation of self from self and from others, is the fundamental concept in both trauma-informed practice and eCPR.

Youth eCPR helps young people learn to navigate trauma and traumatic experiences from a peer-to-peer perspective. Youth eCPR helps youth have a modality and language behind peer support.

# The Unique Needs of Youth



Our youth today are under tremendous pressure like never before in our society.

- Social media
- Lack of true social interaction
- Trauma
- Suicidal Ideation
- Bullying
- Lack of true connecting

This is just to name a few. This is the reason Youth eCPR was created specifically for youth. It allows youth to be trained and learn how to support themselves and others.





# How Did Youth eCPR Come About?

Youth eCPR came about organically based on a need eCPR trainers saw in young people. Some trainers have been training youth in eCPR prior to a curriculum being created.

In spring 2020, the National Empowerment Center and Allies of Indiana brought together 25 adult and youth trainers to co-write the Youth eCPR curriculum. The first unofficial youth training was in June of 2020. The first official Youth eCPR was in August of 2020. There are currently 6 youth peer trainers nationally and over 150 youth have been trained.

# The Ebb and Flow of Youth eCPR



Youth eCPR can be given in a two-day training like eCPR or it can be broken down over 15 weeks. The fluidity of this modality allows the trainer to shape and mold it to the needs of the participants.

The current practice for schools varies from school to school. Some schools have had the course for 1 hour per day over 15 consecutive days while other schools have chosen once a week over 15 weeks.

The ability to create what is best for the students based on the allotted time speaks for itself. The flexibility of the framework allows trainers to make it as hands-on or make it feel more like standard teaching as needed.

Make it what works for your youth.




# How Do We Now Get Youth eCPR in Our Schools?

IT'S NOT EASY





# Now What Do We Do Once It's in?

- We have to foster relationships with school faculty
  - We need to ensure that as many adults in the building take the two-hour introduction course so it can be taught to the students
  - We need to meet with the students who will be taking the course ahead of time to fully explain what the course will look like
  - The trainer needs to understand the culture of the school and community
  - The trainer needs to also make sure that the students participating *want* to participate. The students who do not want to should not be forced to as it will make it really difficult to teach them
  - The trainer should also understand that the regular way of teaching eCPR will not work with youth
- 



# Diving Deeper Into Youth eCPR

Students struggle to connect in a school setting regardless of eCPR curriculum. In order to teach connection the trainer will have to dig deeper and teach vulnerability. In order to teach vulnerability the trainer will have to go even deeper and teach shame and guilt. Teaching the foundational work of vulnerability, shame and guilt allows the trainer to teach connection in a way youth will understand. The trainer keeps in mind that the current social climate for youth and “connection” is superficial.



## How the Elements of C P and R Work Together to Help Youth

Finding connection creates healthier kids. Through connection, people learn their true authentic self, which allows for authenticity with others and healthier overall relationships. It allows for supporting those in emotional distress in a school setting. In a time where youth are more disconnected than ever, it allow them to come back to the basics of human connection. It allows students to focus on themselves and what they are feeling, and to accept that it's ok to feel. Youth eCPR creates a safe space within the school culture that has not been there before: Creating happier youth in touch with themselves and one another. This is something they can bring outside of schools and bring to their home life. This is where Community eCPR comes in.



# Empowerment



Empowerment is described as: “The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one’s own life and claiming one’s rights.”

“Our youth feel unheard and disenfranchised in a school setting and in some cases, in life in general.”

Youth eCPR teaches empowerment in a way that give youth their power back. For instance, here are 3 intentions:

**emPower: I will BE WITH YOU** without fixing, judging, or advising you.

**emPower: I am not sure what is best for you;** together we explore the unknown.

**emPower: Together, we release the power to heal** that lies within us, moving towards our wellness.”



# Empowerment

Youth eCPR teaches youth about active listening.

Youth feel empowered in a setting that supports speaking without interruption, which can be a rare experience for young people.

It also gives them the tools to be able to actively listen with other youth, creating a domino effect of empowerment. Through this process, youth are empowered to problem solve and accept responsibility and accountability. This leads to feeling empowered to support themselves.

**Object “To”**

**Recipient “For”**

**Resource “With”**

| Style #1  | Style #2   | Style #3   |
|---|--|--|
| The adult is in control with no intention of youth involvement.                           | The adult is in control and allows youth involvement           | There is a youth/adult partnership (shared control)                |
| <b>The Objective</b><br>Personal growth of young people.                                  | <b>The Objective</b><br>Personal growth of young people.       | <b>The Objective</b><br>Increased organizational effectiveness.    |
| <b>The Byproduct</b><br>Conformity of young people and acceptance of the program as it is | <b>The Byproduct</b><br>Increased organizational effectiveness | <b>The Byproduct</b><br>Personal growth of young people and adults |

[Image description: A green arrow sits on top of a table and contains the words, “Object to,” “Recipient ‘For,’” and “Resource ‘With’” against orange, blue, and light green highlight, respectively. The table below the arrow has three columns titled “Style 1,” “Style 2,” and “Style 3” from left to right. Under “Style 1,” the text reads: The adult is in control with no intention of youth involvement. The Objective: Personal growth of young people. The Byproduct: Conformity of young people and acceptance of the program as is. Under “Style 2,” the text reads: The adult is in control and allows youth involvement. The Objective: Personal growth of young people. The Byproduct: Increased organizational effectiveness. Under “Style 3,” the text reads: there is a youth/adult partnership (shared control). The Objective: Increased organizational effectiveness. The Byproduct: Personal growth of young people and adults. The text Youth Move National in black and red is located on the bottom left corner.]



[Image description: On the left side are eight text blocks in yellow, green, turquaz, blue, navy, purple, fuschia, and red. The block features the following text from bottom to top: 1. Young people are manipulated\*. 2. Young people are decoration\*. 3. Young people tokenized\*. 4. Young people assigned and informed. 5. Young people consulted and informed. 6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people. 7. Young people lead & initiate action. 8. Young people & adults share decision-making. On the right side is a gray oval with the text that reads: Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation. On the bottom left corner is the text Youth Move National in black and red.]

## Revitalization

Revitalize: We authentically create new life, new voice, and new hope in the present moment, which is revitalizing. Youth are commonly caught in a rut of life. Through connection and empowerment youth become their authentic selves, thus creating revitalization.



**My story**

**Questions**