

The Social Response Pyramid™

Promoting Social Effectiveness



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The Social Response Pyramid™ is a visual strategy that can be used to help people interact more effectively with others by understanding the contexts of each person in the interaction, the strategies that they have available to them (either innate or other strategies), and the potential effects of various responses (as well as how to repair an ineffective interaction). The Pyramid can be used to illustrate and understand various developmental strategies such as sensory integration, executive functioning, Gestalt processing, generalization, and theory of mind. It also helps to make sense of other teaching tools by highlighting the strengths and challenges of an individual and the gaps that need to be filled in order to experience success. The Social Response Pyramid™ is being used in several countries in homes, therapy offices, and classrooms to promote effective interactions—and often does a great job of helping people to calmly work toward successful strategies in situations where emotions and interactions might have otherwise gotten out of control.



Social Incites LLC

More Social Response Pyramid™ information and resources are available at
www.socialincites.com.

THE BASICS of THE SOCIAL RESPONSE PYRAMID™

By Laurel A. Falvo

I. MY CONTEXT: My immediate individual context (What I know, think, feel, expect, believe, remember, etc.)

- A. My past experiences and how they've affected me (what they've taught me and how I feel about them).
- B. My current state of mind and functioning level (and personality)—Autism and other “disabilities” factor into this.
- C. My opinions and expectations (which are generally based on past experience)
- D. My ability to perceive and manage sensory input, emotions
- E. MY CONTEXT is always changing, as I learn new things, meet new people, my feelings fluctuate, etc.

II. STRATEGIZING

- A. Accessing a toolbox of CHOICES/STRATEGIES to select an effective RESPONSE
(We usually have CHOICES!)
- B. Incorporating the SOCIAL CONTEXT as well as MY CONTEXT

III. RESPONDING

- A. The goal be to produce SOCIALLY EFFECTIVE RESPONSES, which incorporate both MY CONTEXT and the SOCIAL CONTEXT. (All responses are authentic, but not all are effective!)
- B. We do not respond to all input. Our brains and sensory systems screen out some input, or reduce input through creating categories, generalizing, or making decisions not to respond.
- C. We should always EVALUATE the effectiveness of the RESPONSE. Sometimes we may need to start over if our RESPONSE was not SOCIALLY EFFECTIVE, or attempt to “repair” the interaction through an apology or other “social fix.”
- D. We should not forget to STRATEGIZE when responding to others' responses! We need to recognize that their responses are simply the “tip of the iceberg,” and are telling us something about their context, their knowledge of the social context, as well as the strategies that they have available to them at the given moment. (This is “Behavior as Communication!”)

IMPORTANT FACTORS/CONSIDERATIONS:

THE SOCIAL RESPONSE PYRAMID™ can be useful for the following:

1. Teaching difficult concepts such as:
 - a. WHY (to explain unwritten social rules, intent, sarcasm, etc.)
 - b. WHAT choices I may have (what I've done in the past that's worked, what others have done, etc.)
 - c. CONSEQUENCES (how the choices I make affect the outcome of a given situation...and how I can change future outcomes through the choices I make)
 - d. HOW I can use strategies to be successful in a wide variety of social contexts
 - e. CREATING SPACE for others, vs. creating “a space” for them (leaving room for their thoughts, feelings, etc.)
2. To remind us to focus on teaching “meaning” rather than rote compliance.
3. To provide a visual representation of social understanding, which can be utilized by and with both adults and children.
4. To illustrate the importance of “alone time” when needed.
5. To show the value and applicability of current research and other resources and strategies (many theories and strategies can be combined with or explained through the use of *The Social Response Pyramid™*). .

SOCIAL CONTEXTS: There are basically two different types of SOCIAL CONTEXTS. In one (represented by a circle), interaction and responses are deliberate and closely connected. In another (represented by a rectangle), interaction and responses are generally not deliberate or closely connected, but people are still sharing space, and their responses are noticed and do matter!

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD): Challenges associated with the diagnosis (as well as many other diagnoses) are likely to affect every area of the Social Response Pyramid™, just as the strengths associated with a diagnosis can be utilized to these individuals' advantage in each area!

BOUNDARIES: The Social Response Pyramid™ can be used to illustrate the importance of BOUNDARIES for each individual, as a way of taking ownership of one's own rights and responsibilities, as well as ensuring that others do the same. It is also an important factor in avoiding bullying and abuse.

To learn more about Laurel Falvo's SOCIAL RESPONSE PYRAMID™,
or to invite her to speak for your group or organization, go to www.socialincites.com.

Instructions for Using THE SOCIAL RESPONSE PYRAMID™

Laurel A. Falvo

Preparing to use this kit:

Color and cut Pyramid templates according to the instructions on the bottom of the template page. If possible, have students color the Pyramids themselves, using their choice of materials. They will start out with equal templates, but each will look a little different from all the others, illustrating the fact that we are all unique individuals. (The pieces will be more durable if they are laminated after coloring).

Become familiar with the intent and usage of The Social Response Pyramid™ by using the information on our web site at www.socialincites.com, and viewing clips on You Tube (search on "Laurel Falvo").

*** When using the Pyramid to understand or instruct, it is often helpful to follow these guidelines:**

Establish the **SOCIAL CONTEXT**: Is the current situation best illustrated with:

Circular context (with deliberate interaction)

Rectangular context (sharing space, but not deliberating interacting with each other)

Is there no social context (i.e. a person was truly alone)?

Discuss **MY CONTEXT** (What I know, think, feel, expect, believe, remember, am able to do, etc.) from the perspective of each person involved, taking turns without interrupting.

When working through conflict, identify the **RESPONSES** that each person had initially chosen. Discuss:

These were likely **authentic responses**, which come directly from a person's own context. Authentic responses are genuine, personal responses to input, stemming from who a person is at this given moment in time.

However, were they **socially effective responses**? (Did they WORK for themselves AND the people around them?) Why or why not?

What have we learned from this experience?

Identify a goal—a **SOCIALLY EFFECTIVE RESPONSE**, talking about various choices (**STRATEGIES**) the person has for responses, and what the consequences of those choices might be.

What has worked in the past?

What have other people done in this situation?

What might work (be most effective) with those around us?

Make a plan for implementing the **SOCIALLY EFFECTIVE RESPONSE**

If necessary, work through a "**REPAIR**" for the current situation (apologizing, etc.)

Wrap up with a summary and praise for the person or people involved in the discussion.

Revisit the situation later, going through these steps again as needed

* You can use *My Social Response Pyramid™ Template*, located in this resource, to aid in Pyramid Discussions.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

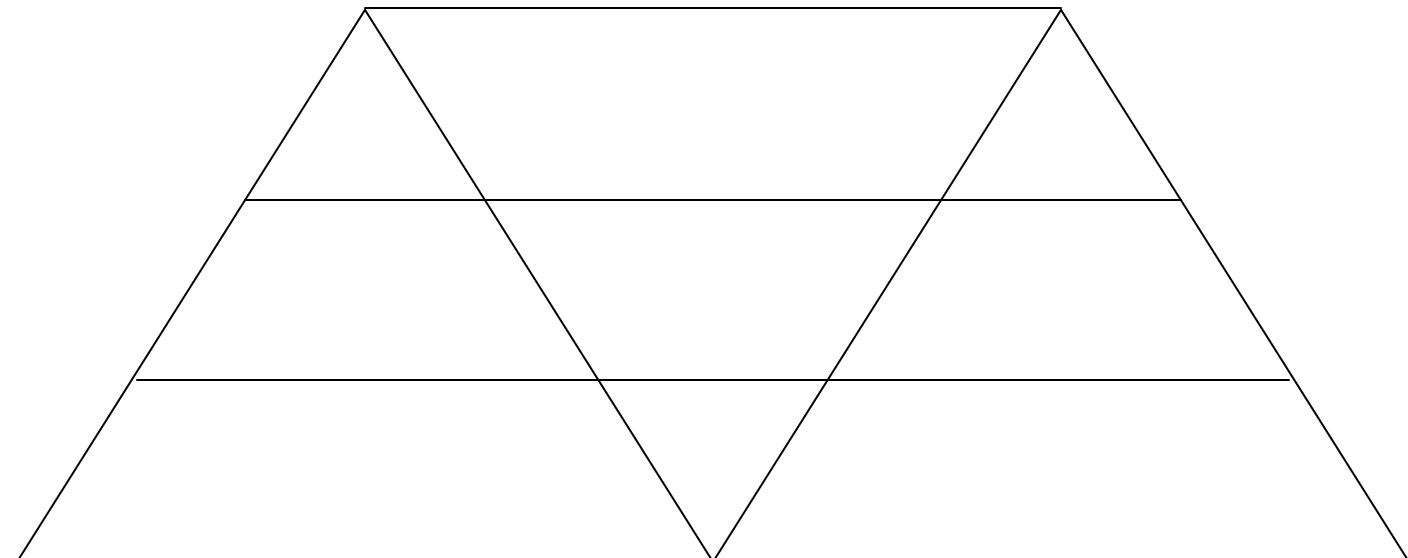
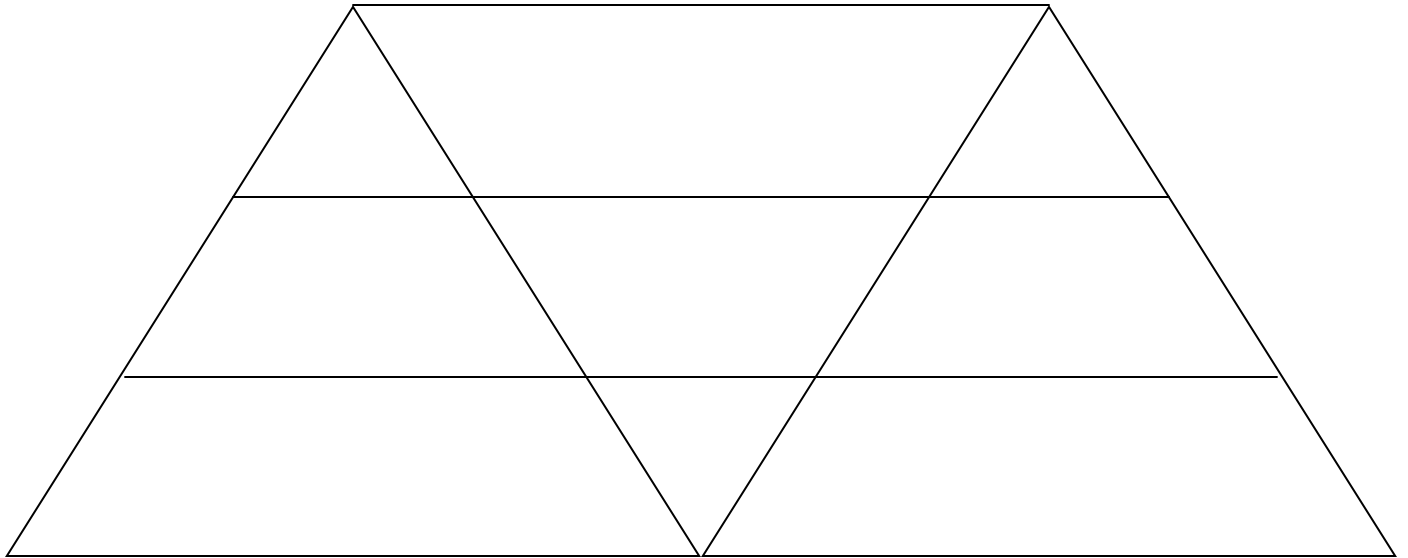
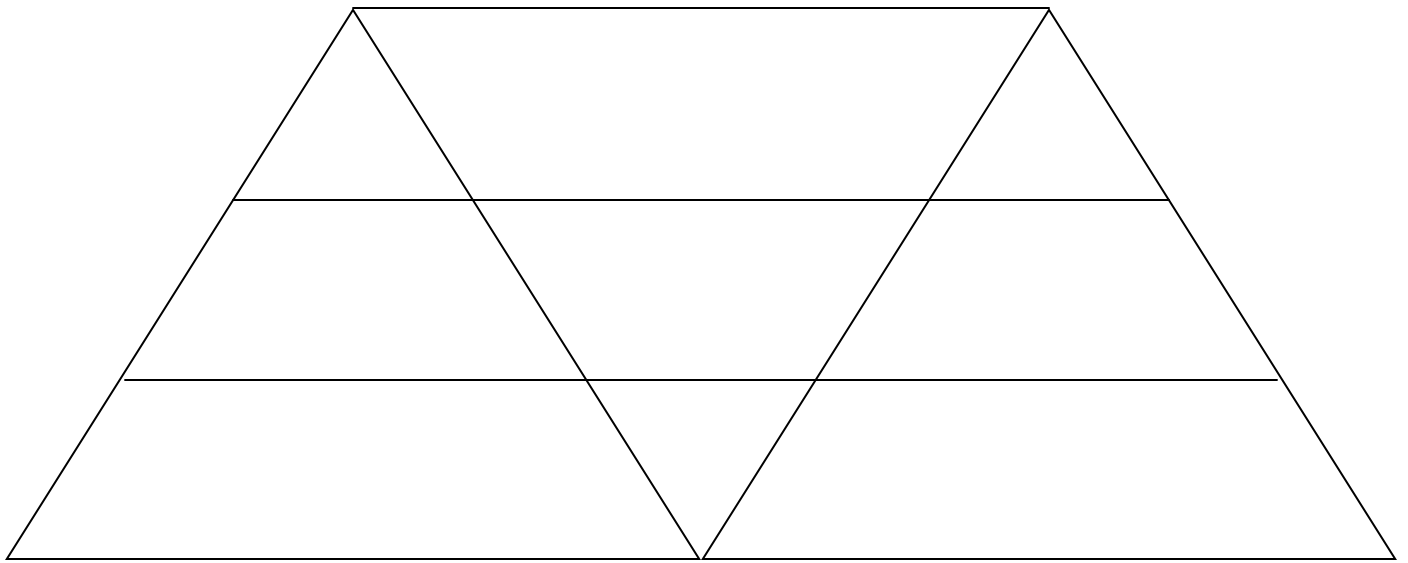
MY CONTEXT colors all of life; we respond to input by first filtering it through what I know, remember, feel, expect, believe, etc. This means we don't always see things the way they really are, but the way we think they are, or the way we want them to be. It also means that other people may have a very different perspective than I do, because they are filtering the input through their own context.

MY CONTEXT is always changing, as we have new experiences and learn from those experiences.

Our ability to produce **SOCIALLY EFFECTIVE RESPONSES** is the key to most successes in life!

The Social Response Pyramid™ is a simple and effective tool to use with people of all ages, including those with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other disabilities. Don't forget to use it yourself, to ensure that you truly understand and are interacting effectively with the people with whom you live and work!

Using the Pyramid can help reduce stress and frustration and more quickly resolve conflict and increase understanding, as people take time to calmly think about other choices that they have for interacting more effectively with others.



"RECTANGULAR" SOCIAL CONTEXT

**We may feel like we're alone,
but we're still sharing space with other people.**

**We need to be thinking about the people around us
and producing socially effective responses.**

"CIRCULAR" SOCIAL CONTEXT

We are sharing space with others who are directly and deliberately interacting with us and/or each other.

We need to be thinking about the people around us and producing socially effective responses.

My Social Response Pyramid Template

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SETTING: Where I was: _____ When: _____

SOCIAL CONTEXT: Who was with me? _____

MY CONTEXT: I was feeling/thinking _____

Because _____

MY GOAL: I wanted _____

MY RESPONSE: and so I _____

EVALUATE: This response (circle one) did / did not work for me. I felt _____

This response (circle one) did / did not work for the people around me

They seemed to feel _____

STRATEGIZE: Next time I can think about _____

And try to _____

EVALUATE: I think this would make me feel _____ and others feel _____

My Social Response Pyramid™ Template

Name: _____

Date: _____

SETTING: Where I was: _____ When: _____

SOCIAL CONTEXT: Who was with me? _____

MY CONTEXT: I was feeling/thinking _____

Because _____

MY GOAL: I wanted _____

MY RESPONSE: and so I _____

EVALUATE: This response (circle one) did / did not work for me. I felt _____

This response (circle one) did / *did not work for the people around me

They seemed to feel _____

*If it did not work for those around me, here's something I can do to help "fix" it:

STRATEGIZE: Next time I can think about _____

And try to _____

EVALUATE: I think this would help me feel _____

and help others around me feel _____

What I've learned: _____

This space is for additional thoughts, comments from other people, pictures, or anything else that might be helpful or interesting.

My Social Response Pyramid™ Template

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Looking at Two Perspectives
And Developing a Plan for Being Socially Effective

2.

What I did or said: _____

This did / did not (circle one) work for me _____

I felt: _____

MY RESPONSE

What I could do next time: _____

How I think I might feel: _____

If a "fix" is needed, I can _____

5.

STRATEGIZE

I was thinking: _____

I was feeling: _____

I wanted or expected: _____

1.

MY CONTEXT

Might have been thinking: _____

Might have been feeling: _____

Might have wanted/expected: _____

3.

OTHER PERSON'S CONTEXT

Social Context:
4. RESPONSE

That
person did
or said: _____

Next time he/she might: _____

If I use my strategies, I think he/she might feel: _____

6. STRATEGIZE

Creating a Personal Success Plan

The Social Response Pyramid™ can be used as a Personal Success Plan. This is the plan I use with many of my clients as I listen to their stories, and help them sort out “next steps” for reaching their goals. Here’s how the process works:

1. **MY CONTEXT:** What do I know, expect, believe, remember? What is my personality, birth order, diagnosis, sensory integration ability? What are my interests, abilities, challenges, emotions, etc.? What is my current situation in terms of housing, employment, access to transportation, financial support, schooling, etc.? In other words, this is a “snapshot” of who I am at this given moment in time.
2. **MY DREAMS:** Obviously, there are many things an individual may dream of doing. While not all are feasible at this time (especially given each of the things detailed under “MY CONTEXT,”), examining my dreams helps to identify my values and keeps some of those more distant dreams alive in my thoughts and future decisions.
3. **WHAT’S DO-ABLE:** What would I like “MY CONTEXT” to look like after a given time frame, perhaps 3 or 6 months from now? What would I change about my current situation or functioning level?
4. **STRATEGIES:** Brainstorm a variety of steps that could take me to a new context (in number 3). I probably won’t end up doing all of them, but generating a wide variety of possibilities helps me to build a toolbox to get from where I am now to where I want to be.
5. **RESPONSES/NEXT STEPS:** Choose three things that will help get me from where I am now, to where I want to be. These won’t necessarily be “solutions,” but they’re designed to keep me moving, and hopefully help me to enjoy success!

Many years ago, I developed The Social Response Pyramid™ to help people to be more effective in their interactions with others. In keeping with the mission of SOCIAL INCITES, LLC, the Pyramid can be used to grow both personally and interpersonally! I use it frequently, not only to teach my students and to interact more effectively with my own family, but also to evaluate my life and plan for my own success! Without it, many of my dreams never become reality. With it, the possibilities are endless as I keep stepping forward toward new goals. I hope it will be as helpful to you and those with whom you live and work!



The Social Response Pyramid™

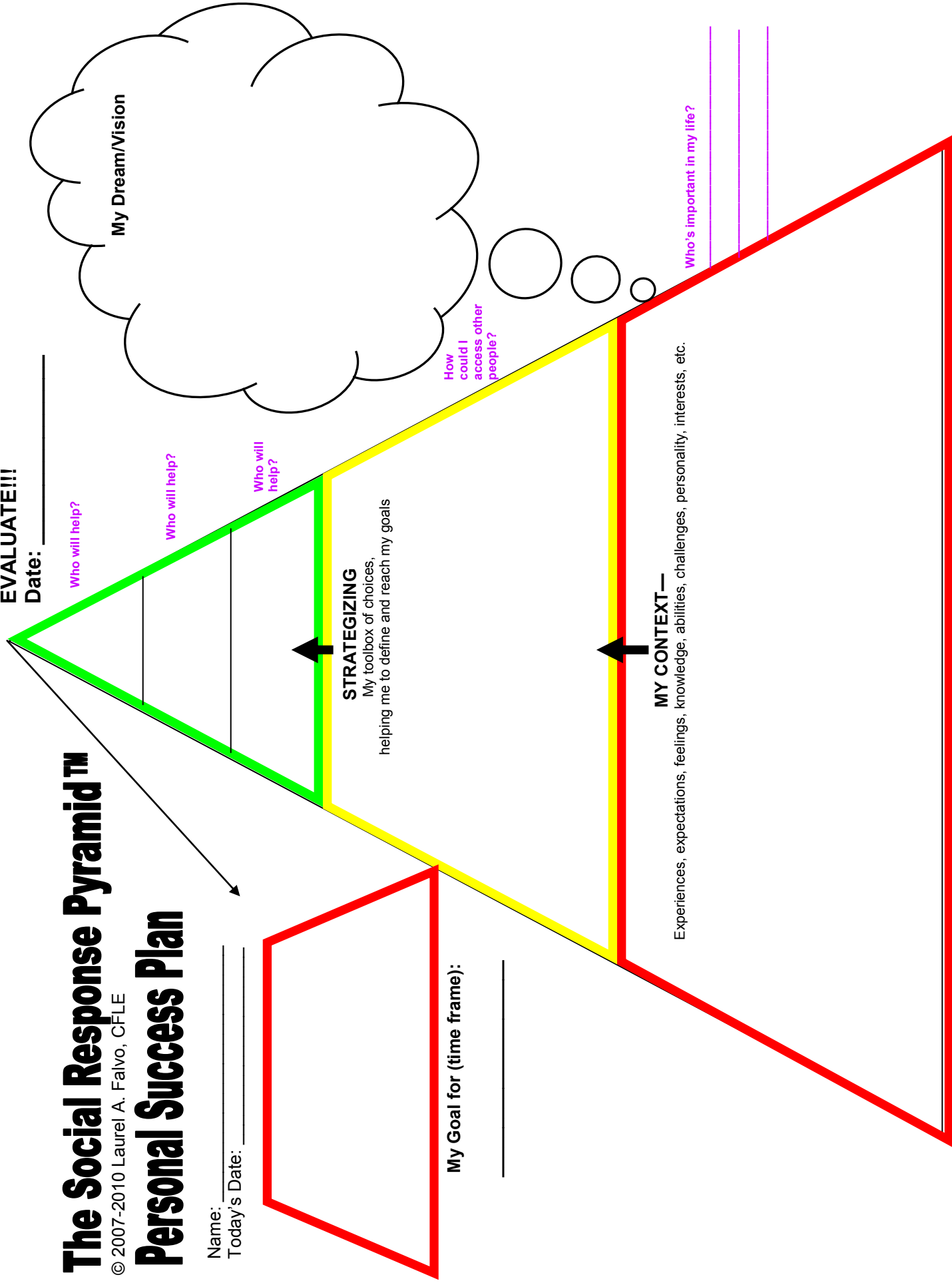
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Personal Success Plan

Name: _____
Today's Date: _____

My Goal for (time frame): _____

EVALUATE!!!
Date: _____



The Social Response Pyramid™

Personal Success Plan

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Name: _____
Today's Date: _____

My Goal for (time frame): _____

EVALUATE!!!
Date: _____

Who will help?

Who will help?

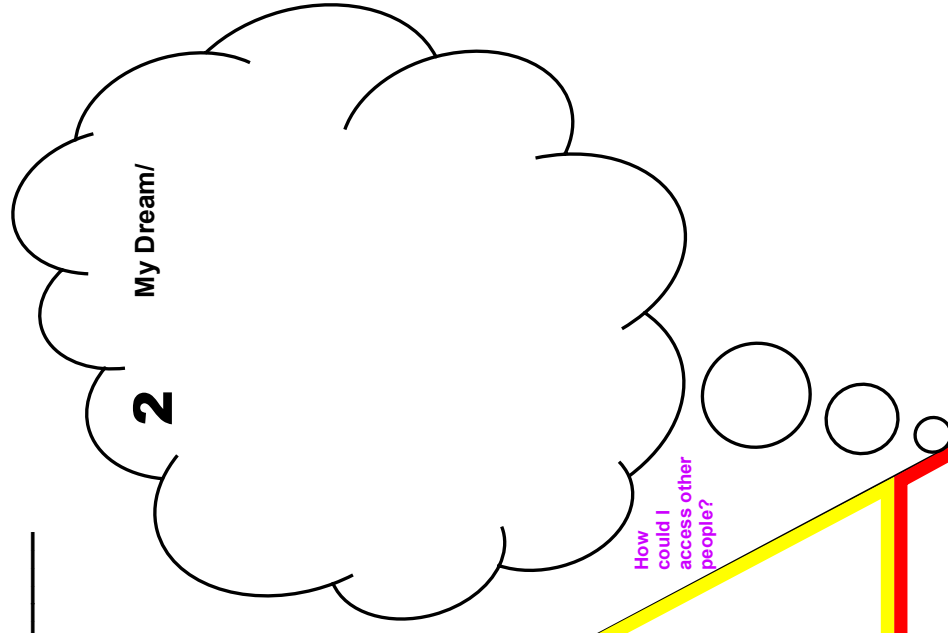
Who will help?

STRATEGIZING

My toolbox of choices,
helping me to define and reach my goals

How
could I
access other
people?

Who's important in my life?



5

4

1

MY CONTEXT—

Experiences, expectations, feelings, knowledge, abilities, challenges, personality, interests, etc.

RESPONSES: Next 3 steps

The Social Response Pyramid™

Personal Success Plan

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Name: _____

Today's Date: _____

Time: _____

1. Who is in my SOCIAL CONTEXT?

What do(es) he/she/they EXPECT from me?

2. STOP to identify MY CONTEXT:

STRENGTHS

that will help me succeed at meeting this expectation:

CHALLENGES

that could make it difficult for me to meet the expectation, or could make me "melt down" or "shut down":

3. STRATEGIZE:

My toolbox of CHOICES, helping me to meet the expectation, and keep from "melting down" or "shutting down"

RESPOND:

to meet my expectation.

4. Who will help?

Who will help? _____

Who will help? _____

Who will help? _____

5. EVALUATE:

Date: _____

Time: _____

DID I RESPOND EFFECTIVELY?

- Did it work for me? Yes / No
- Did it work for others? Yes / No

CONSEQUENCES:

- "Good" consequences: _____
- "Bad" consequences: _____

What have I learned? _____

SOCIAL CONTEXT: Who else could help me succeed?

SOCIAL CONTEXT: Who's here to help me succeed?
