



Training



Research

What is Emotion Coaching

@emotioncoachuk

www.emotioncoachinguk.com

What is Emotion Coaching?

Emotion Coaching is helping children to understand the different emotions they experience, why they occur and how to handle them



Why do Emotion Coaching?

Emotion Coaching is an Evidence-based strategy based upon the work of John Gottman

Emotion Coached children are better able to:

- control their impulses
- delay gratification
- self soothe when upset
- pay attention

As a result Emotion Coached children

- Achieve more academically in school
- Are more popular
- Have fewer behavioural problems
- Have fewer infectious illnesses
- Are more emotionally stable
- Are more resilient

(Gottman, et al 1996)



Elements of Emotion Coaching



What this means in practice

Step 1

Recognising the child's feelings and empathising with them

Step 2

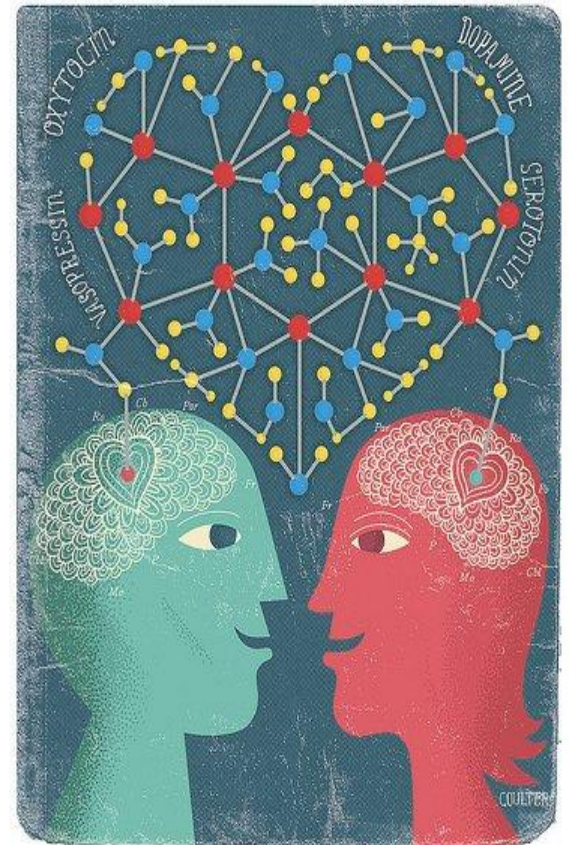
Validating the feelings and labelling them

Step 3

Setting limits on behaviour
(if needed)

Step 4

Problem-solve with the child



Emotion Coaching involves:

- Teaching children about the world of emotion '*in the moment*'
- Giving children *strategies* to deal with ups and downs
- Accepting difficult emotions as *normal*
- Using moments of difficult behaviour as *opportunities for teaching*
- Building *trusting and respectful relationships* with children



Styles of dealing with emotions

- **Emotion Coaching**
- **Emotion Dismissing**
- **Emotion Disapproving**
- **Laissez-faire/Permissive**

Disapproving Style

- Disapproves of difficult emotions as a sign of weakness, lack of control, unconstructive
- Lacks empathy, noticeably critical and intolerant
- Tries to get rid of difficult emotions via discipline, reprimand, punishment
- Focuses on the behaviour rather than the emotions generating the behaviour
- More likely to view difficult emotional displays as a form of manipulation, lack of obedience, sign of bad character
- Often motivated by need to control and regain power and/or to 'toughen up' child



Dismissing Style

- Despite good intentions (wants to make child feel better) is uncomfortable, fearful, anxious, hurt, annoyed or overwhelmed with difficult emotions
- Wants difficult emotions to go away quickly
- Considers paying attention to such emotions will make them worse, prolong them
- Tries to stop difficult emotions by reducing/ minimising/ making light of their importance/significance
 - e.g. it's no big deal, don't worry about it, be a big girl, that's life, you'll be fine*
- Often motivated by need to rescue and make things better, fix the problem e.g. *'have a biscuit', 'I'll buy a new one', 'you need to do this'*
- Focuses on getting rid of the emotion with logic or distraction rather than understanding the feelings



Laissez-faire Style



- Freely accepts all emotional expression from the children
- Offers comfort to the child experiencing difficult feelings
- Offers little guidance on behaviour
- Does not teach the child about emotions
- Is permissive; does not set limits
- Does not help children solve problems
- Does not teach problem-solving methods to the child
- Believes there is little you can do about difficult emotions other than ride them out.
- Believes that managing difficult emotions is a matter of hydraulics; release the emotion and the work is done.

Effects of dismissing and disapproving styles of dealing with emotions upon children

- Child learns ‘what I am **feeling is not right**, my assessment of the problem is **wrong**, I must not feel this way’
- Child does **not learn to trust own feelings** affecting decision-making
- Not given **opportunities to experience** emotions and deal with them effectively so grow up unprepared for life’s challenges
- Not given opportunities to **self-regulate or problem-solve**
- Can lead to **suppression of natural emotions**, less or lack of self-regulation, reliance on distraction to get rid of emotion
- Generates **more difficult feelings** - resentment, guilt, shame, anger

Activity:

Identify the Emotion Coach 1

- Compare **Sadness** and **Happiness** in the following clip.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5Q2dah75Zc>
- Who is **Emotion Coaching**, who is **emotion dismissing** and **why?**



Activity : examples



Disapproving (Low empathy and high guidance):

- “Your behaviour is not acceptable – you will come home straight from school every day this week!”

Dismissing (Low empathy and low guidance):

- “Your behaviour is not acceptable – you’re grounded!”

Activity: examples

Laissez-faire (High empathy and low guidance):

- “I know you feel I don’t trust you and think you’ll be safe – that would annoy me too. Never mind. That’s life.”

Emotion Coaching (High empathy and high guidance):

- “I know you feel I don’t trust you and think you’ll be safe – I understand why you might think that. Maybe, when you’re ready, we can talk and I can try to explain myself better and listen to you better too.”

Activity: Being an Emotion Detective

Watch this clip: Catherine Tate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV1zK8zRCPo>

Identify the feelings going on underneath the behaviour in:

a) The pupil

b) The teacher

Activity Worksheet: Being an Emotion Detective



Emotion Coaching Styles

Emotion Coaching

High empathy

High guidance

Disapproving

Low empathy

High guidance

Laissez Faire

High empathy

Low guidance

Dismissive

Low empathy

Low guidance

www.talaris.org/spotlight_parenting_styles.htm