



Training



Research

What is Emotion Coaching



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What is Emotion Coaching?

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



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 is a relational approach which develops internal regulation

External frameworks

External regulation



Sanctions and rewards
**Behaviour Management
Policy**

Internal frameworks

Internal regulation



Emotion Coaching
**Behaviour Regulation
Policy**

Emotion Coaching involves:

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



Styles in dealing with emotions



- Emotion Coaching
- Emotion Dismissing
- Emotion Disapproving
- Laissez-faire

Disapproving Style



- Disapproves of difficult emotions – viewed 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



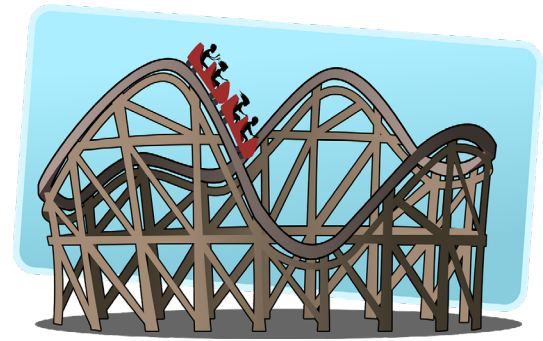
Dismissing Style



- Despite good intentions (wants child to feel better) 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 minimising or 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, i.e. 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
- Is permissive; does not set limits
- Offers little guidance on behaviour
- Does not teach the child about emotions
- 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.



Emotion Coaching

Step 1

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

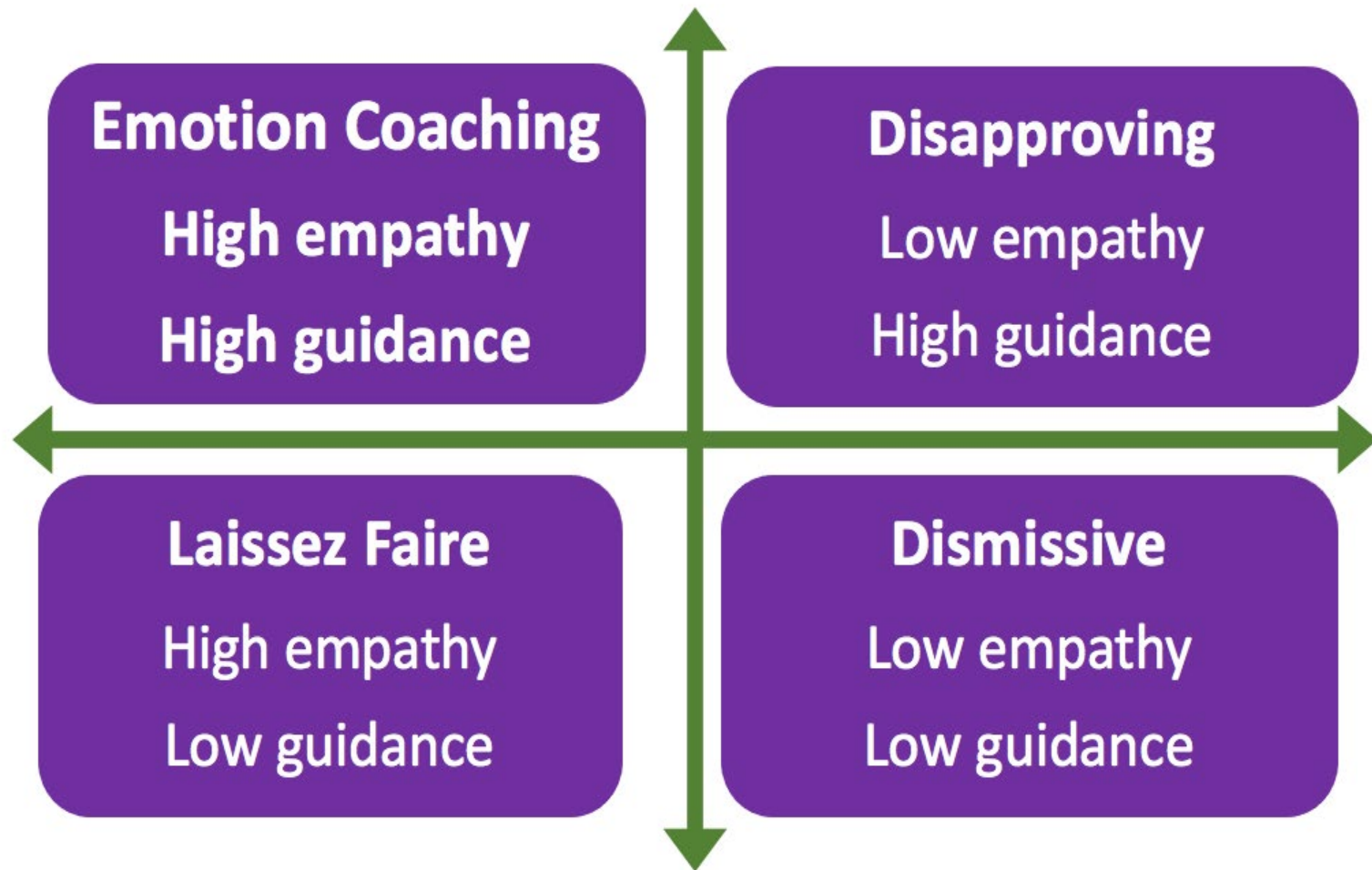
- Child learns *'what I am feeling is not right, my assessment of the problem is wrong, I must not feel this way'*
- Child does not learn to trust own feelings affecting decision-making
- Not given opportunities to experience emotions and deal with them effectively so grow up unprepared for life's challenges
- 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: Who is Emotion Coaching?

- Compare 'Sadness' and 'Happiness' in the following clip.
- Who is Emotion Coaching, who is Emotion Dismissing and why?



Emotion Coaching styles





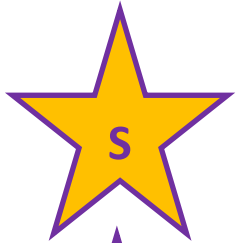
Step 1: Recognise and empathise

‘Connection before Correction’ (Golding, 2015)

- Need to genuinely empathise with the child from their point of view. This doesn’t mean agreeing with them, just viewing things from their perspective
- Recognise all emotions as being natural and normal and not always a matter of choice
- Recognise behaviour as communication (relational vs behavioural model)
- Look for physical and non-verbal signs of the emotion being felt
- Take on the child’s perspective (mentalising/mind-mindedness)

Step 1 of Emotion Coaching:

Recognising the child's feelings and empathising with them



STOP - don't act or react straight away. How is the child's behaviour making me feel?



THINK - what is going on for the child right now? What feeling might lay underneath the behaviour I'm seeing?



ATTUNE - yourself with that feeling by putting yourself in the child's shoes and maybe

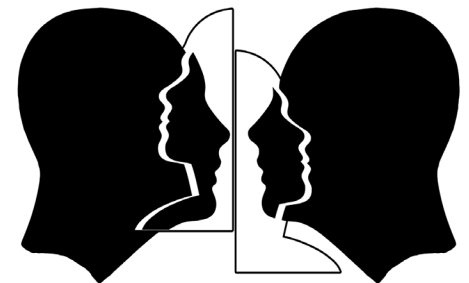


REFLECT - What would be an equivalent situation for you that could cause you to feel that way?

Step 1

Challenges: Empathy

- We feel empathy (i.e. how the child must be feeling) but don't acknowledge this or label it and instead try to make the difficult emotion go away for the child
- We confuse empathy with feeling you are agreeing with a child's behaviour
- We confuse sympathy and empathy



Activity: Sympathy versus Empathy





Step 2: Validate and label

- Use words to reflect back child's emotion and help child to label emotion
- Simply observe – saying what you see rather than asking probing questions to which young people might not know answer
- Telling the emotional person that you understand their emotional situation and that you don't blame them helps soothe their emotional brain





Step 2: Examples of Emotion Coaching Scripts

- *'I can see that you get angry when that happens. I would feel angry if that happened to me. It's normal to feel like that'*
- *'I can see you're frowning and you're kicking the wall and you're expressing a lot of energy. I would be feeling like that too if I didn't want to do something'*
- *'I've noticed you looking around at the others who are working on their projects. I'm wondering if you might be feeling nervous right now about whether your work will be ok?'*

Emotion Words

Anger

Frustrated
Annoyed
Mad
Offended
Threatened

Sadness

Lonely
Hurt
Guilty
Uninterested
Inadequate

Disgust

Disappointed
Bitter
Resentful
Shameful
Averse

Fear

Worried
Insecure
Embarrassed
Rejected
Vulnerable

Surprise

Confused
Overwhelmed
Startled
Shocked
Amazed

1 The importance of Steps 1 and 2 2

‘Sensing, naming and identifying what is going on is the first step to recovery... Being able to hover calmly over our thoughts, feelings and emotions and then take our time to respond allows the executive brain to inhibit, organise and moderate the hardwired autonomic reactions programmed into the emotional brain’

(van der Kolk, 2014)

Regulation can occur from the **bottom up** (e.g. via breathing, touch etc) and **top down** (e.g. via Emotion Coaching providing a co-regulatory soothing narrative)

3

Step 3: Setting Limits (if needed)

- Simply state the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour (positive limit setting)
- Make it clear certain behaviours cannot be accepted.
- Retain the child's self-dignity



‘You’re angry that I’ve taken away your phone, these are the rules everyone has to follow. I will keep it safe for you’

Step 4: Problem solving with the child

When the pupil is calm and in a relaxed, rational state:

- Explore the feelings that give rise to the behaviour/problem/incident
- Scaffold alternative ideas and actions that could lead to more appropriate and productive outcomes
- Empower the pupil to believe they can overcome difficulties and manage feelings/behaviour.



Problem solving with children:

Finding solutions

- *'What does your body feel like now?'*
- *'What feelings are you having?'*
- *'Let's think of what we could have done instead'*
- *'Can you think of a different way to deal with your feelings'*
- *'I can help you to think of a different way to cope'*
- *'Can you remember what we said before'*
- *'Let's sort this out'*
- *'Try and do this next time you feel like this'*
- *'Let's decide what you will do next time you feel like this'*
- *'This is what you can do instead'*
- *'What might your friend do or suggest you do?'*



Step 4: Problem Solving

This could include:

Restorative Approaches:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What were you feeling at the time? (You may need to go back to EC and help the pupils work this out)
4. Who has been affected and how? (both self and others)
5. What needs to happen now to put it right?



Formal problem solving steps:

1. What is the problem?
2. What could I do?
3. List what might happen for each solution
4. Pick the best/preferred solution
5. Do it!
6. Did it work?

Co-regulation, emotional behavioural regulation and Emotion Coaching

Messages conveyed in the 4 Emotion Coaching
steps

1. - *'I understand how you feel, you're not alone'*
2. - *'This is what is happening, this is what you're feeling'*
3. - *'We can't always get what we want'*
4. - *'We can sort this out'*

