



Oak Meadow Primary School

Emotion Coaching Helping people with BIG emotions

Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th June 2019

Helping People with Big Emotions

"Promoting mental health and preventing mental illness is one of the most important goals of our modern public health system."

Public Health England

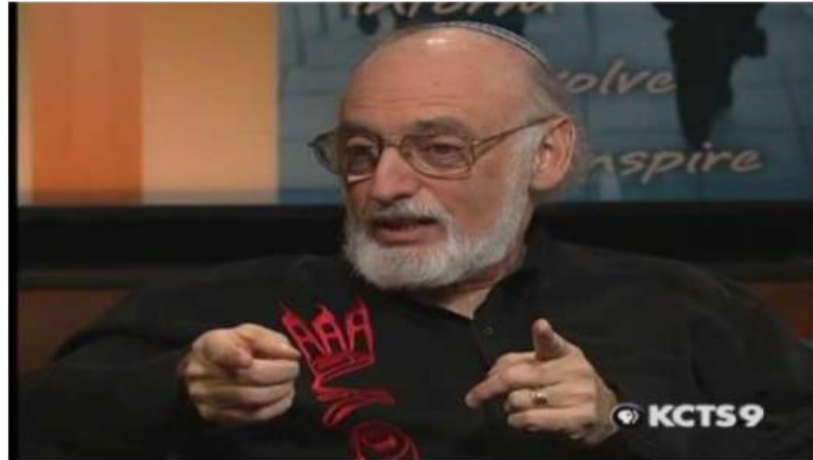
75% of mental health problems in adult life start by the age of 18 years

The hand model <https://vimeo.com/222637418>



What is Emotion Coaching?

Based on research by John Gottman (1997) in America



Research suggests Emotion Coaching is a key to happy, resilient, and well-adjusted children and young people

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



A Dismissing Parenting Style

- Treats child's feelings as unimportant, trivial
- Disengages from or ignores the child's feelings
- Wants the child's negative emotions to disappear quickly
- Minimizes the child's feelings, downplaying the events that led to the emotion
- Does not problem-solve with the child, believes that the passage of time will resolve most problems

Effects of this style on children: They learn that their feelings are wrong, inappropriate, not valid. They may learn that there is something inherently wrong with them because of the way they feel. They may have difficulty regulating their own emotions.



A Disapproving Parenting Style

- Displays many of the Dismissing Parent's behaviours, but in a more negative way
- Judges and criticizes the child's emotional expression
- Emphasizes conformity to good standards of behaviour
- Believes negative emotions need to be controlled
- Believes emotions make people weak; children must be emotionally tough for survival
- Believes negative emotions are unproductive, a waste of time

Effects of this style on children: Same as the Dismissing style.



A Laissez-Faire Parenting Style

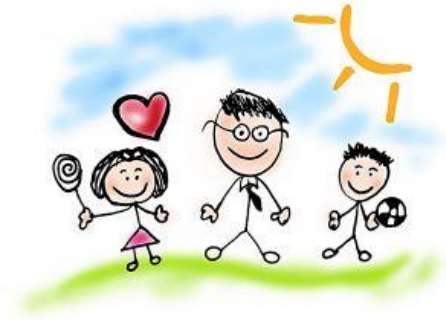
- Freely accepts all emotional expression from the child
- Offers little guidance on behaviour
- Does not set limits
- Believes there is little you can do about negative emotions other than ride them out
- Does not help child solve problems
- Believes that managing negative emotions is a matter of hydraulics, release the emotion and the work is done

Effects of this style on children: They don't learn to regulate their emotions. They have trouble concentrating, forming friendships, and getting along with other children.



The Emotion Coaching Style

- Values the child's negative emotions as an opportunity for intimacy
- Is aware of and values their own emotions
- Sees the world of negative emotions as an important arena for parenting
- Does not poke fun at or make light of the child's negative feelings
- Does not say how the child should feel
- Uses emotional moments as a time to listen to the child, empathize with soothing words and affection, help the child label the emotion he or she is feeling, offer guidance on regulating emotions, set limits and teach acceptable expression of emotions, and teach problem-solving skills



Effects of this style on children: They learn to trust their feelings, regulate their own emotions, and solve problems. They have a high self-esteem, learn well, and get along well with others.



What is the CARE approach?

- Become aware of emotion, especially if it is of a lower intensity (such as disappointment or frustration)
- **C**onnect and view emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
- **A**ccept -communicate your understanding and acceptance of the emotion – empathy
- **R**eflect - Use words to describe feelings – ‘Name It to Tame It’
- **E**nd stage -If necessary, help them to solve problems. You may also communicate that all wishes and feelings are acceptable, but some behaviours are not.



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Empathy Examples

'You seem to be feeling angry. I would feel angry if that happened to me. It's normal to feel like that.'

'I can see you're frowning and I wonder if you're feeling anxious.'

'I think that something's not quite right – can you tell me about it...'

'You look a bit fed up...'

'It's normal to feel like this.'

'What does your body feel like now?'



Empathy Examples

- *'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 noticed you looking around at the other who are working on their projects. I think you might be feeling nervous right now about whether your work will be ok. Have I got that right?'*

- *'These are the rules that we have to follow. Doing that is not ok'*
- *'We can't behave like that even though you are feeling annoyed because it is not safe'*
- *'You didn't put the ball away as we agreed. You're probably angry that you can't play with Billy now because you have to stop now'*



Problem Solving Together

All feelings are OK but not all behaviour is OK

- *When the child is calm and in a relaxed, rational state:
Explore the feelings that give rise to the
behavior/problem/incident*
- *Scaffold alternative ideas and actions that could lead to
more appropriate and productive outcomes*
- *Empower the child to believe s/he can overcome
difficulties and manage feelings/behaviour*



Problem Solving Together

All feelings are OK but not all behaviour is OK

- *'How were you feeling when that happened'*
- *'Next time you're feeling like this, what could you do? How do you think you will react next time or if this happens again.'*
- *'What might help you calm down next time you feel like this?'*
- *'You need to decide what to do about this'*
- *'I can help you to think of a different way to cope'*
- *'What can you do next time that would be more helpful for you and others'*



Moving Class Worries

Acknowledge your child's feelings.

Dismissing your child's fears by saying, "Don't worry. It'll be fine" may prompt your child to argue more that things won't be fine. It's kinder and more effective to acknowledge that your child feels scared. You could say something like, "You're nervous about...", or "You're worried because..." Just hearing that you understand can often ease the burden of worries for children.

Emphasize continuity.

Children often hear, "Things will be a lot different once you're in Year 1, Year 2, Year 6!". Instead, emphasise continuity, rather than dramatic changes, to help your child feel better. Ask, "How different are you the day after your birthday compared to the day before your birthday?" Moving up a year group works the same way. You may want to tell your child, "Your classmates are the same you saw in July." You could also tell your child, "Just like you managed moving from Nursery to Reception, you'll manage this change, too. It's just another step on the same path."

