

# EMOTION COACHING WEBNAR

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## Overview

In this webinar you will learn about:

- ▶ The development of emotional intelligence
- ▶ Gottman's research on parenting styles and emotion coaching
- ▶ Principles and steps to emotion coaching parenting
- ▶ Emotion coaching video examples, and
- ▶ An opportunity to practice emotion dismissive and emotion coaching responses

## What kind of dancer are you?



Disco dancer



Moshing dancer



Simple moves



Modern footwork



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[What kind of dancer are you? - Results](#) | [Mentimeter](#)

## What is emotion coaching?

An approach to support others, particularly children, in understanding and managing their emotions by responding empathetically to feelings rather than just behaviors.

It involves recognizing and validating emotions, helping to label them, and then collaboratively setting boundaries and finding healthy solutions to problems.

This relational process fosters emotional intelligence, emotional regulation, resilience, and stronger relationships, ultimately helping individuals thrive emotionally and socially.

## Emotion coaching and emotional intelligence

- ▶ John Gottman and colleagues at the University of Washington in Seattle reported a longitudinal study showing that the way parents responded to their children's emotions had a key role in shaping children's emotional intelligence.
- ▶ Four parenting Styles:
  1. Emotion Dismissing
  2. Emotion Disapproving
  3. Permissive or Laissez-faire
  4. Emotion Coaching

## Parenting styles



1.09 m

## What is emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to:

- ▶ Identify and understand your own emotions
- ▶ Understand others' emotions and respond with empathy
- ▶ Use your emotional awareness to guide you when solving problems
- ▶ Deal with frustration and be able to wait to get what you want
- ▶ Keep distress from overwhelming your ability to think
- ▶ Be in control of how and when you express feelings

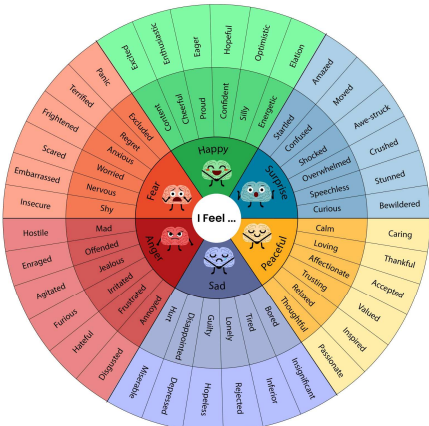
Emotional intelligence is important because it:

- ▶ Enables you to soothe yourself, and therefore be able to calmly focus, concentrate and think when faced with a challenging situation
- ▶ Enables more satisfying friendships and lasting intimate relationships
- ▶ Helps to manage peer pressure and conflict
- ▶ Allows you to have awareness of and control over what you do. This results in lower levels of stress, which are associated with better health
- ▶ Makes you more resilient, so that you can more easily deal with change and stress
- ▶ Helps you to 'trust your instincts', especially on issues of safety, and in unknown or dangerous situations

## Emotion Coaching Philosophy

- ▶ Understanding and expressing emotions is critical for communicating and connecting.
- ▶ All emotions are okay, but not all behaviours are okay
- ▶ Key goals:
  - ▶ Increase emotional awareness
  - ▶ Increase emotional understanding
  - ▶ Increase emotion regulation
  - ▶ Help parents improve their connection with their child

# Breakout Room: Emotional literacy



► <https://padlet.com/megan8evans1/tuning-into-kidss-program-u92chi7evhmxdkvs/wish/1xkVaQ28Y4wLQl0e>

Choose a feeling that represents an emotion you experienced this week:

- What happened?
- What is the feeling?
- What sensations did you notice in your body?
- What thoughts went through your head?
- How did you feel about having this emotion?

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## The steps to emotion coaching

1. Become aware of emotions, especially lower-intensity emotions (such as disappointment or frustration)
2. View emotions as opportunities for connecting and teaching
3. Listen and accept their emotions: avoid judgement
4. Help your child describe how they feel: verbally label emotions
5. If appropriate and when calm, help them problem-solve and negotiate boundaries\*

## Reflective listening

Reflective listening: is listening attentively and then paraphrasing what you heard and reflecting on the emotion your child is coming to you with. This includes:

- ▶ Our first urge is to react to the content of what our child is telling us and then to problem solve. But before you respond to the content and before problem solving, ask yourself what is the emotion/feeling behind the content are they coming with, and connect with that - this helps your child feel heard and validated – you're able to make a connection and it also promotes further communication that will help you better understand what's going on for them
- ▶ Showing acceptance for whatever emotions arise giving them praise for sharing emotion,
- ▶ Tuning in to and exploring the emotions
- ▶ Being sure to show you are listening even when they are not wanting to talk a lot.
- ▶ In order to be present. Sometimes it's best to say nothing and just be with them
- ▶ Allow your child to lead the discussion - your role is to reflect and validate
- ▶ Avoid asking lots of questions - this can be really hard as our first reaction is usually to explore and ask questions. It's important when you find yourself behaving this way to: stop, breath, pause, and notice before we respond. Let your child know that you can see they're having a difficult time, let them know their feelings are important to you, and negotiate a time to revisit.

## Brene Brown discusses empathy



2.53 m

## Emotion Coaching Parenting

- ▶ Involves emotional acceptance and empathy

### EMOTIONAL ACCEPTANCE AND EMPATHY IS...

- ▶ Listening and responding to your child in a way that conveys you accept all their emotional reactions
- ▶ Observing emotions and responding in a way so that they feel heard
- ▶ Recognises all emotions are okay; not all behaviours are okay.

### EMOTIONAL ACCEPTANCE AND EMPATHY IS NOT...

- ▶ No longer having boundaries on behaviour
- ▶ Being drawn into an escalating conflict (instead 'build in a pause')
- ▶ Jumping into problem-solving

## Emotion coaching in practice

- ▶ [Emotion dismissive vs emotion coaching example 1](#)

2.50 m

## Turning towards: Noticing bids for connection

During the day parents are often so busy that we miss opportunities for connecting – be aware and ready to respond:

- ▶ Children might put out 'bids' for emotional connection (asking for attention, expressing interest, attempting conversation or seeking approval) in very subtle ways. This can include statements about problems and dislikes, seemingly irrelevant statements ('Wow! That's a cool bike!') or non-verbal actions (coming into the kitchen and sighing loudly).
- ▶ When a child makes this kind of bid, you have the choice of 'turning towards' ('Yeah, that does look pretty cool!'), 'turning away' (ignoring the statement or talking about something else) or 'turning against' ('I think it looks crap', 'You've got a bike already!')
- ▶ Sometimes bids for connection can appear negative. 'You never buy me clothes like Sarah's mum'. This is still a bid for connection and can be responded to by turning towards. 'Sarah gets some great clothes from her mum.'
- ▶ 'Turning towards' means becoming more aware of your child's bids, and showing interest by asking questions, making affirming statements, reflecting what your child says or showing empathy. You often need to wait for the opportunity for children to share their emotional experiences. With this age group, you're not always the one who determines the timing.



## Becoming attune to your child's emotion

### 1. Noticing the Emotion:

What face/body expression does your child have?

How might you feel in that situation?

### 2. Clarify with a Question:

Help your child work out how they feel. You look a little \_\_\_\_\_. Do you want to talk about what's going on? I'm wondering if....?

### 3. Acknowledge, Empathise, and Validate the Emotion:

One of the most important ways to respond is with acceptance and understanding.

You can use non-verbal communication to show care and understanding:

Soothing noises e.g., hmm, gosh, oh, wow, to convey empathy

Sitting in silence while they find the words to talk

Physical affection e.g., hugs, rubbing back

## Understanding our emotional shark music



4.35 m

## Pressing the pause button

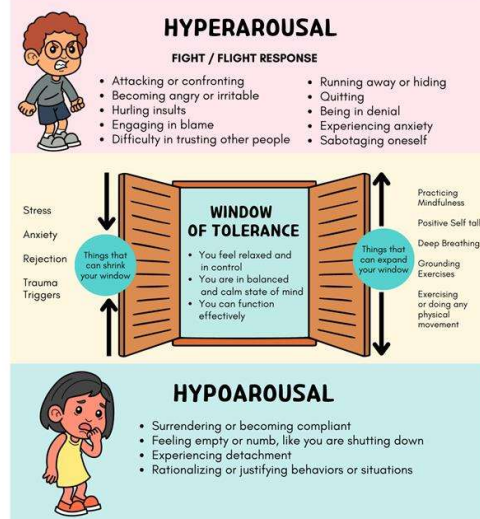
Before we can respond effectively to our child's emotions, it is helpful to pause and notice our own emotional experience and thoughts that are coming up for ourselves. It can be helpful to practice using a 'pause moment' to reflect e.g.,

1. Start by taking in a deep breath and breathing out slowly, this gives you some time to notice your own reactions
2. Notice, any thoughts and feelings coming up for you
3. Ask yourself how is my child's experience different to my own and what can I do with my stuff to be there for my child (e.g., do you have enough resources in your emotional cup to be there for your child right now). And remember the "HALTS": Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired, Stressed.
4. Next ask yourself:
  1. is this an emotion coaching moment?
  2. If yes attune to your child's feelings without judgement, or
  3. if no, can we acknowledge and validate their experience and make another time for an emotion coaching moment?

## The window of tolerance

### Window of Tolerance

When people are within their window of tolerance, they are in a psychological space that allows them to perform daily activities without their emotions and thoughts overwhelming or interfering with their functioning.



## Flipping your lid! When your thinking brain is offline!



2.03 m

## Mirror neurons and coregulation

We now know through brain imaging research, that the areas of the brain involved in our own emotional experiences can also activate when we witness those emotions in others.

E.g.: If someone makes a disgusted face, your mirror neurons for disgust become active, making you feel a similar sense of disgust and understand their emotional state.

The same is the case when we share our calm with our child. Our children learn to sit with and regulate their emotions through observing us and also via mirror neurons through coregulation with parents and trusted adults.



## Emotion coaching in practice

- ▶ [Emotion dismissive vs emotion coaching Example 3](#)

3.50 m

## Fishbowl Exercise



## Fishbowl Practice

First role play being emotionally dismissive, then emotion coaching

Choose a scenario from an example below:

- ▶ Scenario 1: Your child wakes in the morning and says they don't want to go to school. You know they have a test that day. They deny concerns about the test.
- ▶ Scenario 2: Your child returns from a party looking very sad. You ask if they are okay and they say they don't want to talk and go off to their room.
- ▶ Scenario 3+: Case examples from the group

After each role play, discuss:

- ▶ How did it feel during the emotion dismissive vs emotion coaching experience
- ▶ What would be your typical response in a similar situation?
- ▶ How do you think your child might typically respond to the emotion dismissive vs coaching example?

## When to be an emotion coach

- ▶ Aim for 30-40% of parenting  
time in coaching mode =  
Good enough parenting

## Breakout Room: Practice Plan

Discuss some ideas to practice emotion coaching with your child's lower intensity emotions. Discuss in your breakout rooms:

- ▶ What is your child's emotion you are going to target?
- ▶ When are they likely to experience this emotion?
- ▶ What will you do/say?
- ▶ Is there anything you might struggling with?

## Emotion coaching helpful tips

- ▶ <https://padlet.com/megan8evans1/tuning-into-kidss-program-u92chi7evhmxdkvs/wish/0BA3ZpgGomzzQnPb>

You've got this!



Questions and feedback

What is something you found useful from today's webinar?

