Mindful Emotion Coaching
Introductions

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GetSet
Focus For Today

- understanding the **HOW TO** of emotion regulation
  - Dan Siegel’s metaphor The Hand Model

- John Gottman’s 5 steps of Emotion Coaching
Feelings Matter - Warm Up

Are you disrespecting me?

think about the feelings going on underneath the behaviour in

- the pupil
- the teacher

The importance of a meta-emotion philosophy (Gottman, 1997)
Feelings Matter - Exercise

Think about behaviours you meet in your work setting that really get under your skin.

How often in the course of a day do you find yourself simply trying to survive a difficult moment?

- take a moment to imagine yourself in a specific moment when things didn’t go right – how did you act and react?

- are your actions and reactions helping on the path toward creating responsible, caring, capable people?
Mindfulness

www.headspace.com
www.emotioncoaching.co.uk

- attachment theory – the brain as a social organ
- neuroscience of emotions
- mindfulness
- emotion coaching
Emotional Responses

Paul Ekman – Core Emotions

Disgust         Fear         Anger         Sadness         Joy

Innate, hardwired and universal
Emotional Responses

- The first step – being aware of our own emotions.
- We use our awareness of our own emotions to notice other’s feelings.
- This allows us to respond in an attuned way.

Modelling ways of expressing and managing emotions
Emotional Responses

Choose an emotion that you have remember experiencing

In brief, what happened/the event?

Where did you feel the emotion in your body?

What thoughts went through your head?

(How did you feel about having this feeling?)
Attachment Theory

Through non invasive scanning of very young babies and children the brain has come to be seen as a ‘social organ’- dependent for normal development on stimulation through social interaction and influenced in a multifactorial way by other factors including epigenetics, physical health and diet. The importance of interconnectedness and relationships in human development has been extensively researched.

Key early figures are:
John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, Mary Main, Patricia Crittendon
Attachment Theory

Babies are born with the basic brain structure ..... neuronal connections form by the firing of neurones when the baby is stimulated.

A baby who receives loving attention will form different neuronal pathways from a baby whose parent or care giver is unable to be sensitive and synchronous.

The ‘different’ neuronal pathways that form in a baby with a parent or care giver who is unable to be synchronous is thought to be the basis for the formation of unbalanced emotional responses.

www.fivetothrive.org.uk
When all the areas of our brains are working together we experience a sense of integration and thriving.

Dan Siegel calls this ‘The River of Wellbeing’

How much are we paying attention to building long term skills and helping our children/ staff grow and learn?

What do we want for them, now and through into the future?
One of the ways the thinking part of your brain (frontal cortex) works with the brain stem calming your bodily responses and helping you stay balanced is via the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve is a cranial nerve which begins in the brain stem and travels to most of our vital organs including our heart and lungs.
Vagal Tone - How well your fight/flight response and vagus nerve are balanced and work together, i.e. Regulate affect

Measuring pulse rate is one way of assessing vagal tone.
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*
“Much of today’s popular advice ignores the world of emotions. Instead, it relies on child-rearing theories that address the children’s behaviour, but disregard the feelings that underlie that behaviour” (Gottman, 1997)
Emotion Coaching

- Become aware of emotion, especially if it is of a lower intensity (such as disappointment or frustration)
- Connect and view emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
- Accept - communicate your understanding and acceptance of the emotion – empathy
- Reflect - Use words to describe feelings – ‘Name It to Tame It’

End stage - If necessary, help them to solve problems. You may also communicate that all wishes and feelings are acceptable, but some behaviours are not.

Emotion Coaching

- Teaching children/young people/us about the world of emotion ‘in the moment’

- Giving strategies to deal with ups and downs

- Accepting all emotions as normal

- Not all Behaviour is OK

- Building trusting and respectful relationships with children/young people
Lessons Learned

- To empathize
- To read others’ emotions and social cues
- To control impulses (Self-sooth and self-regulate)
- To delay gratification
- To motivate themselves
- To cope with life’s ups and downs
Disapproving Style

- Disapproves of negative emotions – Viewed as a sign of weakness, lack of control, unconstructive
- Lacks empathy, noticeably critical and intolerant
- Tries to get rid of negative emotions via discipline, reprimand, punishment
- Focuses on the behaviour rather than the emotions generating the behaviour
- More likely to view negative 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

- good intentions but is uncomfortable with negative emotions
- Views negative emotions as toxic and so must be ‘got over quickly’
- Considers paying attention to such emotions will make them worse, prolong them
- Tries to stop negative emotions by reducing/minimising/making light of their importance/
  
  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
We all have feelings and need to recognize them in ourselves as well as others.

We are not alone and we are accepted, supported, valid, cared about, understood, trustworthy and respected – This is then returned.

We are empowered and it’s safe to engage in problem-solving.

All feelings are normal but need to be regulated and expressed constructively.
Scripted Role Play

- In pairs go through the two scripted role plays.
- One person plays the child; one the parent
- Start with the dismissive script;
- Then the emotion coaching script

Feedback and discussion with the group

Tuning in to Teens Hand Outs 11,12,13,14
Developing Empathy

- 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 verbal signs of the emotion being felt
- Take on the other’s perspective (Mentalising/ Mind-mindedness)
- Use words to reflect back emotion
- Provide a narrative for the emotional experience (creating cognitive links)
Maintaining compassion

Guided relaxation/meditation/mindfulness

Emotional Self Care

Meta Emotion Philosophy

Emotional Awareness/ mindfulness
Why Emotion Coach

- 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, 1997)

‘Emotion coaching is about helping children and young people to understand the different emotions they experience, why they occur and how to handle them’ John Gottman
Practitioners’ quotes

“I have used the technique with another student who would not accept help from any professionals. After an EC conversation (which took place with him in a car and me outside of the door!), we together came to the decision that he needed to see a GP. He has done this and is now also keen to accept help from CAMHS and an EP which he hasn’t ever done in the three years he has worked with us”

“EC has benefited my practice immensely. I feel empowered and confident in my practice when giving support/advice to colleagues/students and parents”

“it has reduced the number of incidences that may have otherwise escalated”

“I found it extremely useful. It has clear steps and a lot of the results are quite immediate. It has also provided opportunities to talk about emotional and mental health issues with colleagues’
Practitioners’ quotes

“It has made a massive difference in the way I now work with Families”

“It is an approach that makes sense and links explanation of how the brain functions with issues such as attachment. I think it is a practical accessible model to use with children and young people. It’s also helped to de-escalate situations of unwanted behaviours very quickly”

“It has made a direct impact on how I approach a child who has lost control. I am more able to preempt and defuse a situation before it becomes a problem”

“Helpful in starting conversations with children, and not shying away from big issues”

“Helps children become more resilient in dealing with their feelings in school”
Practitioners’ quotes

“Learning about how the brain works and how it can be regulated has supported me in managing young children’s outbursts”

“It has helped some young people enormously. With one boy it helped to open up routes of conversation with him that have meant that he now accesses his education at our centre rather than at home.”

‘CAMHS have closed and have told mum that the EC techniques are the most suitable approach. Mum is noticing that Y is not melting down so often and is starting to self-regulate’
Young People’s quotes

I found it useful in calming someone down and to help people trust me and then they will tell you the problem.

It helps me socialise and feel better about myself.

It has helped me to understand my emotions and other people’s emotions. I can understand that certain people can change emotions very quickly.

I have learnt more about the brain and why people behave in a certain way.
Increased Awareness of Emotional / Mental Health

- Yes: 87%
- Sometimes: 10%
- No: 3%

N = 72
Increased adult awareness- knowledge and self regulation

N = 72
Positive impact on Professional Practice

- Yes: 78%
- Sometimes: 20%
- No: 1%

N = 72
Positive impact on Children’s Behaviour and Wellbeing

N = 72
Creating and Sharing Training Materials

‘Emotion coaching is about helping children and young people to understand the different emotions they experience, why they occur and how to handle them’  John Gottman
Creating and Sharing Training Materials

- [www.emotioncoaching.co.uk](http://www.emotioncoaching.co.uk)
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- Facebook
- Twitter
Professor John Gottman, Psychologist, The Gottman Institute

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