Mindful Emotion Coaching

‘Name it to tame it’ – Professor Dan Seigel

Emotion coaching is a strategy for promoting behavioural self-regulation.

www.emotioncoaching.co.uk
Your brain is a like a computer...
It processes information you get from
your environment and tries to make
sense of it.

It is also a **Social Organ** as it needs
other brains to
interact with to
work at it’s best.

**How does your brain work?**

Your brain is organized into
different areas of responsibility.
E.g. senses, emotions, logical
thought and memory

The more you use the network –*the
bigger, better and faster* it becomes

The different areas are all connected
together by a **network** of hundreds
of billions of neurons
The emotion part of your brain called the amygdala acts like an accelerator on your emotions.

The thinking part of your brain called the prefrontal cortex acts like a brake on these emotions...

You make your best decisions when these different parts of your brain connect well with each other and the brain stem.

Adapted from Dr Daniel Siegel  The Whole Brain Child
So…..Babies are born with the basic brain structure…..neuronal connections form by the firing of neurones when the baby is interested (stimulated).

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

Connections form in our brains all the time but especially in the first two years of life this carries on right through childhood up to about the age of 25…
How we BEHAVE is determined by what happens within us, within our brain... All our feelings and emotions are OK but not all behaviour is.

You can calm the emotion area of your brain (amygdala) by stimulating your thinking brain or prefrontal cortex.

Mindfulness, mindful exercises and Emotion Coaching are all ways you can build up your emotion resilience.
Professor Dan Siegel talking about The Hand Model of the Brain on You-Tube…

…Make sure you look at Dan Siegel’s follow on You Tube Clip and you know all about Flipping Your Lid


Middle Prefrontal cortex

Brain Stem

Limbic System

www.ehcp.co.uk

Catherine Shadwell
The Vagus Nerve

One of the ways the thinking part of your brain works to calm your bodily responses and help you stay emotionally balanced is via the vagus nerve.

The vagus nerve travels from your brain stem to all the key organs in your body doing things such as lowering your heart and breathing rate.
Emotion Coaching

Accepts all feelings as normal (*but* not all behaviour as acceptable)
Feelings can always be talked about (no matter what the behaviour)

* ‘Name it to Tame it’ is a phrase used by Professor Dan Siegel – by naming emotions we stimulate the thinking part of our brain which stimulates the vagus nerve and calms our bodily responses

* **Handy Hint**
  It is *normal* to have *all* sorts of feelings
  We can get better at understanding and knowing how to manage our feelings
Humans are ‘wired’ to feel and respond to emotions such as Anger, sadness, disgust, fear and joy to survive and thrive (Take a look at research by Paul Ekman on his research into emotion*)

Everything we sense (experience) passes through the part of the brain that is in control of emotional responses as well as the part of the brain that decides how to respond (think) and what to do (behaviour).

*Handy Hint
Take a look at the Inside Out DVD or watch this You Tube Clip and you can see how Paul Ekman worked with Disney
https://youtu.be/oauGmJ52XmM
John Gottman’s 5 Steps of Emotion Coaching...

1. Be aware of your friends’ responses
2. Recognize emotional times as opportunities for connecting
3. Listen empathetically and recognizing feelings
4. Help verbally label emotions – this helps soothe the nervous system and recovery rate
5. LASTLY – solve problems together

...what this means in practice

STEP 1 Tuning In
STEP 2 Connecting with each other
STEP 3 Recognising feelings and empathising
STEP 4 Validating feelings and labelling
STEP 5 Problem solving

References: Professor John Gottman, University of Washington
https://www.gottman.com/blog/an-introduction-to-emotion-coaching/

Tuning in to Teens™ – Havighurst, Harley & Kehoe - Mindful, Melbourne University and Tuning in to Kids® – Havighurst & Harley, Mindful, Melbourne University
Step 5: Problem-solving together

- Emotion Coaching is all about building and enhancing relationships... remember Problem Solving comes last... make sure you explore feelings before you problem solve!

- When you are both **calm** and relaxed and where appropriate (or seek further help):
  - **Talk about** other ways of doing things
  - **Especially talk about** ways of recognising feelings earlier and finding ways of calming the emotion part of the brain ...

> “How were you feeling when that happened?”
> “What did it make you feel like?”
> ‘Can you remember feeling this way before and what you did?”
> “How did you handle it last time?”
> ”What do you think you could change next time?”

---
