

# Short version of the Six Steps to Family Wellness Programme

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[www.mindfulemotioncoaching.co.uk](http://www.mindfulemotioncoaching.co.uk)

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Caring for ourselves with kindness and compassion involves paying attention to our bodies and minds as well as to our environment, including connections with other people. This programme is all about relationships but regular exercise and balanced nutrition as well as quality sleep are also core parts of wellness.

[Click here for a Podcast introduction by Sarah](#)

## Six Steps to Wellness with Mindful Emotion Coaching

We aim to support you to understand what happens in your brain when you feel overwhelmed or stressed out. The six step programme is designed to support the wellness of professionals, parents and carers. It is best completed with someone you feel at ease and safe with (close friend, a member of your family or a trusted person at school or work). Try and find time to look through the links below before you begin:

- [Dan Siegel's Hand Model](#)
- [John Gottman's Emotion Coaching.](#)

You may find it helpful to listen to [Dr Sarah Temple talk about emotions and feelings](#) and make the link between neuroscience and mindfulness. You can find out more by going to [www.mindfulemotioncoaching.co.uk](http://www.mindfulemotioncoaching.co.uk) and accessing video clips and a free e-learning portal.

Too scientific for you? Try watching Amy talking about Dan Siegel's Hand Model at [www.thehandmodel.co.uk](http://www.thehandmodel.co.uk).

- 1 : Noticing your warning signs
- 2 : Noticing moments of calm when you're feeling good
- 3 : Noticing your environment
- 4 : Managing your emotions
- 5 : Connecting with people and places
- 6 : Identifying friends and family you can talk with

## Getting to grips with the theory behind Mindful Emotion Coaching

You might find it helpful to take a look at our online resources through links at [www.mindfulemotioncoaching.co.uk](http://www.mindfulemotioncoaching.co.uk) before you start looking at the six steps to wellness that we have put together.

### Interested in finding out more?

Mindful Emotion Coaching is based on the extensive evidence base and practical learning materials created by Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University. [Sign Up to join EHCAP's Learning Community](#) and access hand outs to use with the six steps and to join a Whats App group.

We look for evidence based metaphors that we can all remember and use, for example, the model of **positive, tolerable, toxic stress**.

**Positive Stress** is a normal and essential part of healthy development, characterised by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels.

**Tolerable Stress** activates the body's alert systems to a greater degree as a result of more severe, longer lasting difficulties, such as the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury. If the activation is time limited and buffered by relationships, the brain and other organs recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.

**Toxic Stress** can occur when we experience strong, frequent, and / or prolonged adversity- such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and / or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship- without adequate adult support. This kind of prolonged activation of the stress response systems can disrupt the [development of brain architecture](#), affect immune systems, hormonal systems and how our DNA is read and expressed. In other words it **changes how our cells work together**.

This programme focuses on psycho-education tools that build skills and capabilities in emotion intelligence and executive function - relevant for all of us as and particularly for those who have experienced toxic stress.

This video clip from 'Circle of Security' [explains how toxic stress can affect our ability to parent](#) .



## 1: Noticing your warning signs when your lid is starting to wobble

Think about the last time you got really emotional and then think back to how you were feeling in the time leading up to that moment. Research by [Paul Ekman](#) tells us that **all humans experience seven core emotions** - Joy, Anger, Sadness, Disgust, Contempt, Surprise, Fear. Sometimes emotions overwhelm us and affect our behaviour. Learning to notice both feelings and physical changes will help you take action early and make changes.

*'All emotions are OK but not all behaviour is OK'* [Professor John Gottman](#)

If you're having trouble talking about your feelings and labelling your emotions it can help to work with a trusted adult such as a Parent Family Support Advisor(PFSA) or Family Support Worker. Close friends and family may also be in a good position to spot any changes that you might not be aware of. Here are some 'Noticing' handouts which we have designed for parents and carers of children in Early Years.

[Handout One](#), [Handout Two](#), [Handout Three](#), [Handout Four](#)

### Write down your warning signs

#### SUGGESTIONS :

*worrying about little things, not sleeping, more fussy than usual about food, heart rate up, sweaty, head aches, tummy pains, binge eating, feeling unusually tired, feeling anxious about everyday things, snappy with friends and family, difficulty getting organised or planning ahead, arguing with people, mood changes, struggling to keep up with usual things, feeling hopeless, feeling trapped, drinking alcohol or taking drugs to cope.*

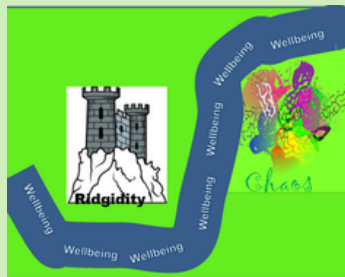
**Need help now? You can call or email Samaritans 116 123 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)**

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## 2: Noticing your moments of calm when you're feeling good and your lid is down

When you're having thoughts or feelings that overwhelm you, it's easy to get caught up in the pain you're feeling and forget the positives in your life. Thinking about moments when you feel calm, happy and 'tuned in' may help you 'bring your lid down'. Professor Dan Siegel talks about 'The River of Wellbeing' in *The Whole Brain Child* page 9. Try and feel what it's like to be peacefully floating along in a good relationship with the world around you - sometimes you will drift toward the bank of rigidity (lack of flexibility and adaptability) and sometimes toward the bank of chaos (total lack of control). This exercise is about noticing when you are feeling calm and content in the flow of the river.



**Describe the things you do that make you feel calm and content**

### SUGGESTIONS:

*taking a long bath, exercising, spending time with a close friend or family member, walking my dog, spending time with my parents, painting, drawing, pottery, being creative, my faith or spirituality, spending time with my pet, helping others, sitting still, walking slowly thinking about my feet on the ground, yoga, massage, meditation, mindful breathing, mindful eating*



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**ACTION PLAN** -Caring for ourselves with kindness and compassion involves paying attention to our bodies and minds as well as to our environment, including connections with other people.

**Managing my Sleep**

**Making sure I exercise**

**Eating well**

**My emotional and mental health**

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