

Emotion Coaching

A parents bite size
guide – session 2

Manager to consultant



Adolescence is a time when parents and carers have the opportunity to shift from being a 'manager' in your child's life to a 'consultant'. Enabling them to become truly who they are and supporting them in who they choose to become.

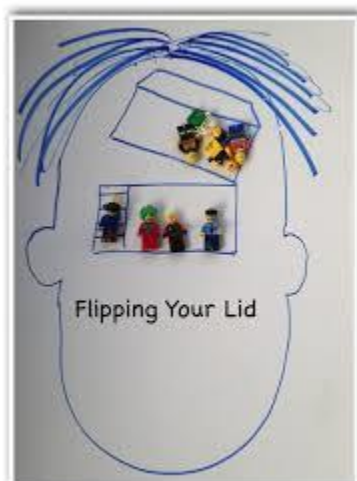
This can be one of the hardest things for us to do. We have always been the ones to 'fix' the problems, feed our children at night, change their nappies, and make everything okay. Now we need to adjust our positions and let go somewhat but in a constructive way to allow for emotional development and help to build our young people into resilience adults.

Tables from session 1

I am sure you were able to find some examples to complete the two sheets from last week.

Firstly, let's have a look at something which may be consistent across many charts. That when both young person and adult's lids were flipped, or almost flipped a resolution was near impossible.

This simply reinforces that when you're emotional and thinking brain are connected we are able to make better choices. Another way of seeing this is our upstairs and downstairs brain, especially useful for younger children.



Before we can begin to emotion coach our young people

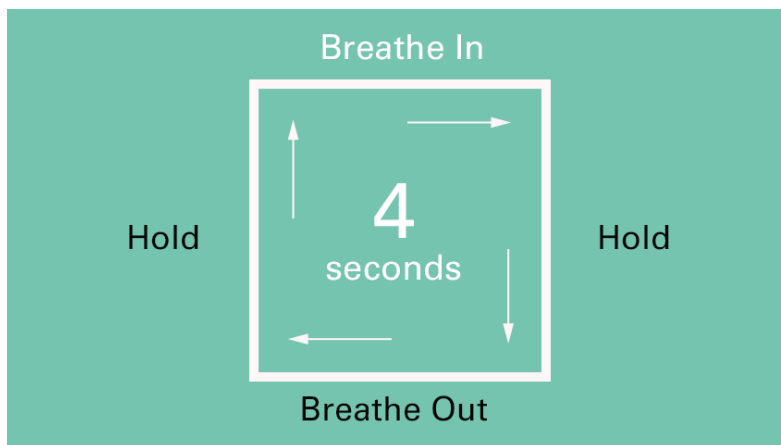
If you were able to complete column three from last week 'what could I do better next time' you may have noticed that those actions relied on you as the parent / career.

This is where your consultant role is really important. It is not easy to do and in those situations we all do our best at the time, but sometimes we regret things we have done and said. This is the same for our young people. To successfully emotion coach we need to be able to regulate ourselves first. This takes practice. Here are some ideas you could try next time in preparation for when you're faced with a difficult situation.

Box breathing

This is a technique which is a powerful stress reliever, it can also enhance concentration.

Take slow deep breaths, holding in for 4 seconds and then out for 4 seconds. Aim for 6 cycles.



Taking a few minutes

Saying what you see or what you feel.

There is nothing wrong with saying to your young person the following, in fact it demonstrates good self-awareness, resolve and regulation

“I am feeling angry/upset/annoyed/frustrated right now, when I have calmed down I will come back and see if you’re ready to talk”

“I am here if you need to talk”

“I am going to get us both a drink then we can talk”



PAUSE

Pause and notice the difference between the feeling and the action.

- You are not angry, you’re experiencing an angry feeling.
- You are not sad, you’re experiencing sadness.

These strategies are cognitive reframing, they take time and perseverance. Even the most effective emotion coaching parents and careers don’t get it right every time. Big emotions are powerful and frequent when you’re a parent / career.

We all have a choice in how we react to a situation. What we shouldn’t try to control are our feelings.

*“All feelings are okay,
all behaviours are not”.*

How do we emotion coach?

5 steps

A perfect time to emotion coach is when the lid starts to lift a small amount. These are the 5 steps that we recommend following.

PAUSE – recognise feelings and empathise.

1. **Become aware of emotion.** Especially if it is low intensity.
2. **Connect.** This is an opportunity for connection.
3. **Accept.** All emotions are okay and you understand that, even if it's a difficult feeling for you.
4. **Reflect.** Say what you see, use words to describe feelings.
5. **End stage.** Scaffold building problem solving, encourage ideas from them or set boundaries and how it could be better next time.

- The pause is important!!! This provides time for you to check yourself emotionally in order to connect and help identify how they are feeling.
- Notice the emotion - look at the body language and facial expression.
- Help them to work out how they feel - simple question like 'you look a little worried' – this will give the connection the young person is looking for. This will help them to work out how they feel.
- Clarify with a question - this will help them to understand how they are feeling in order for them to name the emotion.
- Acknowledge, empathise and validate the emotion - This is one of the most important ways to respond to a young person. This can be done with non-verbal communication.



Opportunities to connect

Over the next week have a go at practicing self-regulation then steps 1-4 (or just 1 and 2) and see how you get on.

Below are some pointers and ideas of when your young person may wish to connect (some not possible given the current situation) as well as some sentence ideas.

Opportunities to connect is about finding environments in which your teen is more likely to talk to you about their emotional experiences. Teens will vary in their preferences for when they feel most comfortable talking.

Consider what might work for your teen. For example:

- * watch a favourite TV show, DVD or go to a movie together
- * play card, board or electronic games
- * listen to your teen's music with them
- * attend your teen's sporting events
- * arrange a family outing (a walk in the park, bush or beach)
- * have a hot chocolate or coffee in a local cafe
- * use touch and affection when possible
- * go shopping together
- * make a meal together
- * create something together (garden or work on a building project)
- * talk together as you drive somewhere
- * make a photo board or revolving screen.

Emotion coaching conversation starters

That sounds difficult

You look so happy

You seem a bit sad

Gosh that's awful

Ohhh wow (with facial expression/body language showing empathy)

Maybe you are cross with her?

It sounds like you were...

Hmm. And what was that like?

You seem a bit worried

I wonder if you are a little jealous?

How frustrating?

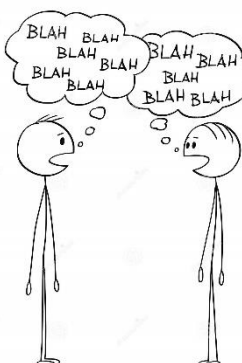
I bet that made you feel pretty annoyed

Add your own favourites.....

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.....
.....

Body language is critical - use head nods, silence and pauses to show you are listening.

Too much talk can shut teens down.



Emotion coaching diary

In the first column list the emotion your teen showed. In the second column write what you did/said, and in the third describe your teen's response.

<i>What was your teen's emotion?</i>	<i>What did you do/say?</i>	<i>What was your teen's response?</i>

Next week we will be looking at different parenting styles and the affects the way we were parented have on us and our young people...