

Educational Psychology Overview Guide

Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is an approach which enables children to manage their behaviour by supporting them to understand their different emotions. It is based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships promote children's outcomes and resilience.

Emotion coaching is a practical approach to dealing with behaviour in the moment and uses moments of heightened emotion and behaviour to support the child and young person to develop more effective responses.

Key Elements involved in Emotion Coaching include:

- Recognising, empathising and validating feelings of a child and labelling these feelings
- Setting limits on their behaviour
- Problem solving with the child to identify more effective responses.

Emotion coaching scripts could be developed to support with co-regulation. This involves:

Step 1: Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm: "I understand how you feel, you're not alone, I am here for you"

Step 2: Validating feelings and empathising: "It's difficult when the day starts differently to how you expected. I understand, I would feel angry, too."

Step 3: Setting boundaries on behaviour (if needed): "It's okay to feel cross/angry but let's find a safer space for you to be right now, rather than shouting in the corridors."

Step 4: Problem-solving with the child/young person: When the child/young person is calm and regulated (which could be some time after the event), explore the feelings behind the incident, scaffold and explore more prosocial outcomes and empower the child to believe they can overcome difficulties and manage their feelings/behaviours.

Through repetitive, consistent and empathetic Emotion Coaching, the child's emotional state is acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling 'felt'. This activates changes in the child's neurological system and allows the child to calm down, physiologically and psychologically. Thus, the ability of a child to regulate their emotions is promoted.

For further information, please see Manchester's Inclusion toolkit: Section Four, pg 278-283.