

# SEND Coffee Morning

25<sup>th</sup> June 2025

# Welcome



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# Welcome



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# Emotions coaching

- Introduction
- Safe & secure vs perceived danger
- Why emotions coaching?
- The four steps of emotions coaching
- The four Rs of emotional regulation
- Adult emotional regulation

# Introduction

Emotions help to switch on and switch off two important human survival systems: our more complex and sophisticated 'social engagement system' (which can access our thinking brain) and our more primitive 'stress response system' (which accesses our primitive survival brain).

These two systems work together to enable us to socialise, problem-solve and communicate with others when we feel safe and secure (the social engagement system) and spring into survival action if we feel threatened, stressed or unsafe (the fight and flight system).

Humans also have an inbuilt 'surveillance survival system' that constantly monitors our environments and other people to ensure we are ready to respond to threats and danger. It helps to coordinate the social engagement system and the stress response system to help us make decisions on how to behave and respond.

Although most of the time we are unaware of its influence, the surveillance survival system function develops as we get older and through our personal experiences and environments.

# Safe and secure

When we feel seen and safe, soothed and secure in our environment and relationships we are able to use our more sophisticated social engagement system to tune into and interact with others.

When our behaviour and thinking is driven by the social engagement system, we are able to engage in more socially appropriate behaviour, think more clearly, learn new skills and problem-solve.

Due to the hierarchical nature of our human survival systems stress response system, we prefer to use the social engagement system. We look to familiar others for reassurance or seek help if possible, if we are unsure or have doubts about our safety.

# Perceived danger: real or not

If there is no reassurance or we perceive (real or not) that we are in danger the more primitive stress response is activated. The body automatically releases hormones that increase our pulse and breathing, increase sugar levels in the blood to give us more energy, narrow our attention to focus on the threat, change our hearing, so it is less tuned to the human voice and more to locating threats. Our thinking and behaviours (fight, flight or freeze) become focussed on our survival with less opportunity to use logic and rationality.

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to talk and rationalize with another person when they are in the middle of an emotional crisis?

This stress response system uses up a lot of the body's physical and mental energies.

# Why emotions coaching?

Childhood is a time when we learn about what emotions are, how they make us and others feel, how to express them and what to do when emotions/feeling are overwhelming or unpleasant.

Emotion Coaching with your child when they are feeling stressed works with the physiology of the social engagement system and stress response system to help them to calm, problem solve and develop more positive social behaviours.

Using empathetic role modelling, co-regulation to help them calm, repetition, and opportunities to learn to self-regulate, children learn to understand, manage and problem solve the stresses in their lives. Through this process your child will learn the skills of self-regulation.



# Step One: Recognising the child's feelings and empathizing with them.

This first step does not require physical action, but is the internal acknowledgement of the adult that the child is experiencing an emotional moment.

It allows the necessary pause for thought and is important because it gives the adult the time to bear witness to the child's emotions, tune into their own empathy and get ready to act in step two. But it may involve some action such as simply cuddling a child to help them to calm.

# Step One example

You could:

Offer them a cuddle

Sit down next to them

Give them some space

Meet them at their emotional level

Offer them a drink/snack/treat etc.

# Step Two: Validating and labelling with the emotion the child is feeling in the moment.

This step may seem awkward and unnatural at first. Watching an angry person enacting their anger and telling them that you can see that they are angry may seem patronizing and unnecessary. But research tells us that just by naming the emotion the other person is feeling, we are encouraging the regulatory processes to engage and reconnecting the thinking brain with the limbic system.

By being with the person as they are experiencing a heightened state and through naming that emotion, we are communicating that a) we understand how they are feeling and b) it is ok to feel like that. This explicit is a vital step and without it, effective Emotion Coaching cannot happen. The acknowledgement and validation of feelings can help a child's brain to feel heard and soothed.

# Step Two example

“I wonder if you are feeling...”

“I can see that you are (describe what you can see) I wonder if you might be feeling... ?”

“The way you are feeling is making you/made you angry”

“I can see that something’s not quite right – can you tell me about it...”

“I’m sorry that happened to you, you must have felt ...”

“I can see that you get angry when that happens/when I do this”

“I would feel angry if that happened to me”

“It’s normal to feel \_\_\_\_\_ about that”

“It’s ok to feel \_\_\_\_\_ about that”

“I can understand you’re feeling \_\_\_\_\_ – I would too”

## Step Three: Set the limits

It's important to recognize that just because you have demonstrated empathy and validation in Step Two, Emotion Coaching isn't about ignoring the fact that some behaviours aren't acceptable.

What Emotion Coaching practice is striving for is the understanding that behaviours are telling us that something isn't right – our quest is to find out about the emotions that are driving the behaviour.

However, as Steps One and Two help you identify and empathise with the emotion, Step Three allows you to put some limits on the behaviours, if necessary.

## Step Three example

A positive and empathic way of doing this is to simply state what is the acceptable behaviour or what you would like to see your child doing in this scenario.

For example, 'when we have had enough to eat we can put our cutlery on the plate and/or take our plate to the sink' rather than "we do not throw food around the room".

A good example of this would be to consider a sad seven-year-old who has just hit out at a friend. Acknowledging the child's sadness identifies you as an understanding and empathic adult and as the child begins to calm, stating, 'I understand you're feeling really sad today, remember one of our golden rules is kindness, so 'we use kind hands when we are with our friends' becomes perfectly logical.

This is the key to Step Three: making clear which behaviours are and are not acceptable.

# Step Four: Problem Solving

Emotion Coaching endeavours to teach resilience and step four is important to reinforce the idea that children and young people have the capacity within themselves to develop self-regulation skills to cope with their own emotional worlds.

In step four, the Emotion Coaching leader works with the child to consider what they could do when they feel those strong emotions next time.

Wherever possible, new solutions should be driven by the child or young person, but there are times, especially when the child is new to the process, when some ideas will need to be given about how to control their temper or manage their fears.

# Step Four examples

“How were you feeling when that happened?”

“What did it make you feel like?”

“Have you felt that way before?”

“What does your body feel like?”

“What feelings are you having?”

“What does it make you want to do?”

“Can you remember what happened to make you feel like that?”

“Let’s think of what we could have done instead”

“Can you think of a different way?”

“Can you remember feeling this way before and what you did?”

“Have you thought about doing this instead?”

“Can you remember what we said before?”

“How did you handle it last time?”

“What did you do last time this happened?”

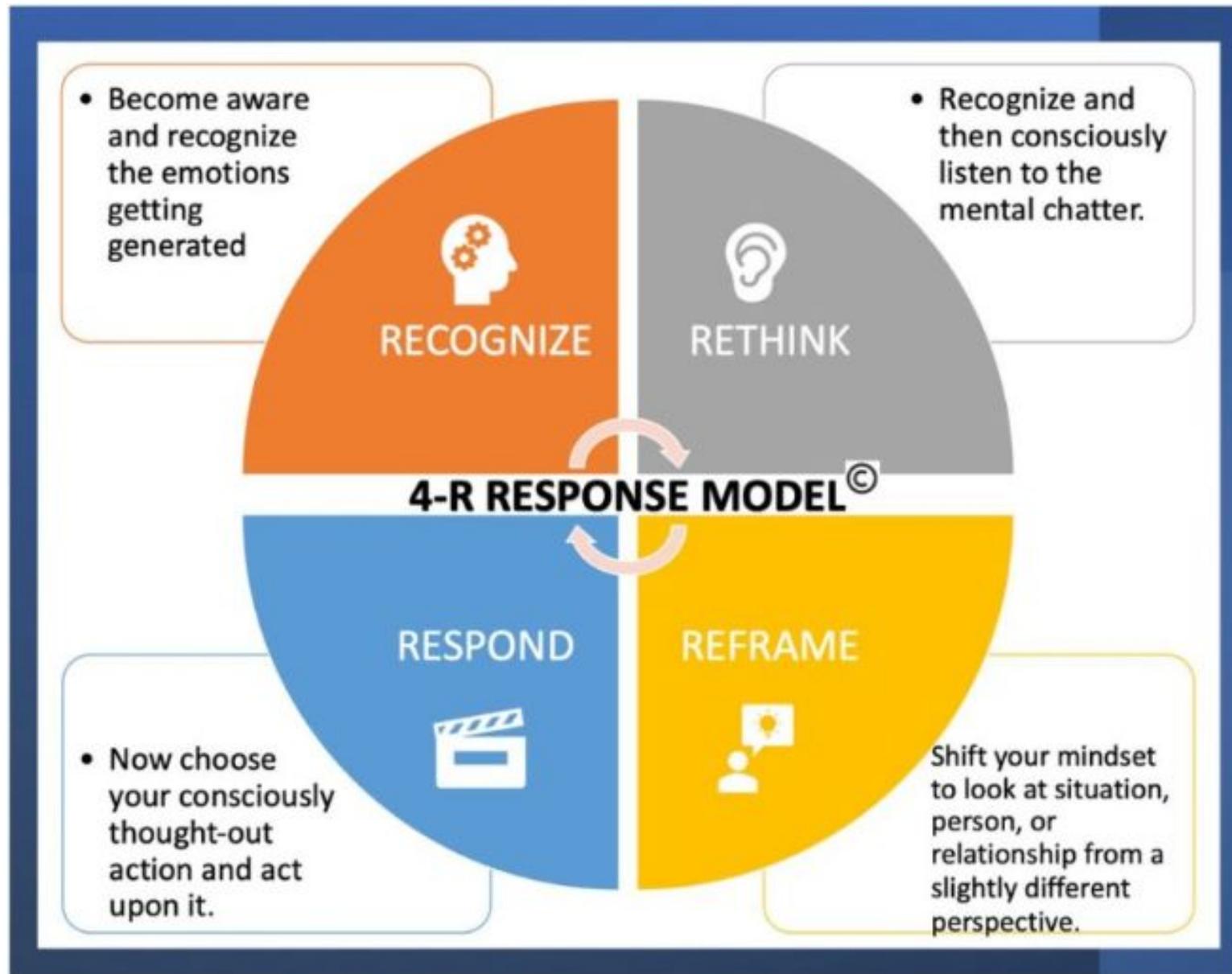
“Can you remember what we discussed last time?”

“Can you remember how you solved it before?”

# The Four Rs

Another way of looking at emotions coaching is through the four Rs. The four Rs of emotional regulation are Recognize, Reflect, Reframe, and Respond.

- Recognize the emotion.
- Reflect on where the emotion came from.
- Reframe by challenging the thought or where the emotion came from.
- Respond by using a regulation technique.



# Importance of adult emotional regulation

Another important point that is key to the process of Emotion Coaching is your own understanding, attitudes and beliefs about emotions and how they should be expressed.

The emotional world of the adult involved in Emotion Coaching is as important as the emotions being experienced by the child or young person in their emotional moment.

Emotion Coaching works best when emotional moments are approached by the adult in a calm and well-regulated manner. Demonstrating calm in tone, words and body language is important – you are modelling the behaviour you want to see.

This of course, is often easier said than done, especially when coping with behaviours that are anger inducing and time is limited. You can't co-regulate if you can't self-regulate!

# A mindfulness approach

Mindfulness meditations are a useful tool to support emotions and emotional regulation.

However, getting a child to engage in mindfulness practice is very hard.

A mindfulness approach is where you rate an activity and then look to see how you can improve it.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PART 1

<p>I avoid this if I can</p> 	<p>I am very anxious about this</p> 	<p>I feel a little anxious / uncomfortable about this</p> 	<p>I feel comfortable about this</p> 	<p>I enjoy this</p> 

9. Working in a quiet class



10. Working when other children are messing about



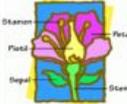
11. Reading aloud in class



12. Written work - handwriting



13. Recording what I have done in pictures, diagrams or graphs



14. Using the computer to record what I have done



15. When the teacher tells off other students



16. When the teacher is giving back our homework



1. Answering questions in class



2. Listening when the teacher explains what we are going to do



3. Following instructions



4. Knowing what to do to start a task



5. Working on my own.



6. Working with a learning partner



7. Working in a group



8. Asking a teacher for help when I have not understood something



**How do I contact you?**

**send@barnwoodpark.co.uk**

# Links

- <https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/>
- <https://www.emoneeds.com/blog/emotion-regulation-skills-exercise-strategies/#:~:text=What%20are%20the%204%20R's,Reflect%2C%20Reframe%2C%20and%20Respond.>
- <https://www.gottman.com/blog/an-introduction-to-emotion-coaching/>