

# Session 1:

## The foundations for Emotion Coaching teens

### Overview

- Introduction to the program
- Warm-up exercise
- Program overview and structure
- Understanding adolescent behaviour
- Emotional intelligence
- Emotion Coaching.

### Resources on Emotion Coaching

- Emotion Coaching: Group leader demonstration
- Role-plays.

### Home activities

- Opportunities to connect: Be available to talk with your teen each day, at a time when they are most likely to feel comfortable talking. This might be after school, after dinner, while watching TV together, while driving, or at bedtime. See the handout *Opportunities to connect*.
- OTC has the benefit of providing quality time with your teen and can improve communication. Try to listen in an open-minded and non-judgemental way. Not all teens talk openly about feelings; be patient with them.
- Notice lower-intensity emotions such as worry, irritability or disappointment.
- Complete the *Conversation with your Teen* activity.
- Use the Emotion Diary to record OTC and/or Emotion Coaching experiences.



# What is emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to:

- identify and understand your own emotions
- understand others' emotions and respond with empathy
- use your emotional awareness to guide you when solving problems
- deal with frustration and be able to wait to get what you want
- keep distress from overwhelming your ability to think
- be in control of how and when you express feelings.

'A set of traits that matters enormously for our destiny.'

(Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.)



# Why is emotional intelligence important?

Emotional intelligence is important because it:

- allows you to have awareness of and control over what you do
- results in lower levels of stress, which are associated with better health
- enables you to soothe yourself, and therefore be able to calmly focus, concentrate and think when faced with a challenging situation
- enables more satisfying friendships and lasting intimate relationships
- helps to manage peer pressure and conflict
- makes you more resilient, so that you can more easily deal with change and stress
- helps you to 'trust your instincts', especially on issues of safety, and in unknown or dangerous situations.

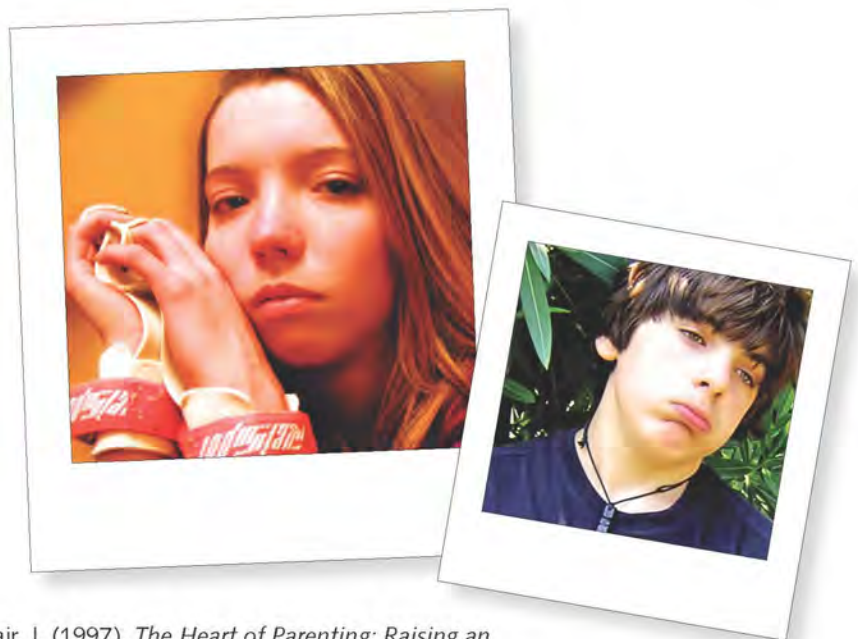




# Emotion Coaching

To Emotion Coach your teen you:

1. Become aware of the young person's emotion, especially if it is of a lower-intensity (such as disappointment or frustration)
2. View their emotions as opportunities for connecting and teaching
3. Listen and accept their emotions: avoid judgement
4. Help your teen to describe how they feel: verbally label emotions
5. If appropriate, help them to problem-solve: negotiate boundaries.



Adapted from Gottman, J. M. & DeClair, J. (1997). *The Heart of Parenting: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

# Emotion Coaching teens: key pointers

- Accept and acknowledge your teen's feelings
- Maintain boundaries, but negotiate and reduce these as your teen grows
- Expect shortness, few words, grunts and displeasure: don't take it personally
- Avoid reacting out of rejection: remember their response is part of becoming an independent, thinking adult
- Be around: this allows opportunities to connect when the young person is ready
- Step back: 'I'll be there if you need me.'
- Have a mental map of your teen's life, but avoid becoming over-controlling!



# Tuning in CARE: the five steps of Emotion Coaching

1. **Tuning in:** notice or become aware of emotions.
2. **Connect and teach:** it's an opportunity!
3. **Accept and listen:** show understanding and empathy.
4. **Reflect:** what you hear and see. Name the emotions.
5. **End with problem solving and setting limits if necessary.**

Adapted from Gottman, J. M. & DeClair, J. (1997). *The Heart of Parenting: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.





# Glossary

## Anger management

Being in control of your own behaviour when you are angry. This involves:

- being more aware of what triggers your anger
- controlling what you do when you are angry
- expressing your anger in ways that are safer and more constructive for you and for other people.

## Criticism

Negative comments that have the effect of making someone feel judged as a person.

## Delayed gratification

Waiting before getting a reward.

## Emotional acceptance

Noticing and tolerating your teen's emotions without judgement. This is a key factor in predicting whether a parent and teen will remain connected.

## Emotion Coaching parenting style

A style of parenting in which a parent pays attention to the teen's emotions and helps them to identify, understand and express their emotions, as well as helping them to solve their problems.

## Emotion disapproving parenting style

A style of parenting in which the parent judges and criticises their teen's

emotions, and attempts to control their emotional expression. Parents who prefer this style might also have trouble expressing their own feelings.

## Emotion dismissive parenting style

A style of parenting in which the parent ignores the adolescent's feelings, preferring instead to distract them and focus on positive rather than negative feelings. Parents who favour this style often have trouble expressing sadness and attempt to control or hide their own anger.

## Emotion permissive parenting style

A style of parenting in which the parent accepts the teen's emotions but does not help them to solve problems. Parents who prefer this style often express their own emotions but have difficulty managing and resolving them.

## Emotion expressiveness

Showing emotion through (for example) language, body language, facial expression and actions.



### **Emotion regulation**

Monitoring and modifying your emotional reactions in ways that result in more appropriate and effective expression of emotions.

### **Emotional intelligence**

A person's ability to understand, express and regulate their own emotions in ways that are effective for themselves and others.

### **Emotional self-care**

Being aware of and looking after your own emotional needs.

### **Emotion Tuning**

Identifying and exploring emotions (part of Emotion Coaching).

### **Empathy**

A person's ability to recognise and understand another person's emotion, and to empathise – to 'put themselves in the other person's shoes'.

### **Meta-emotion**

What people think and feel about showing emotion; the attitudes and beliefs that people hold about emotions and their expression.

### **Modelling**

Demonstrating a behaviour that others can learn from; this is one of the ways that people (especially children and teens) learn.

### **Opportunities to Connect (OTC)**

A time for parent and teen to talk about emotions, and a chance to apply Emotion Coaching strategies.

### **Praise**

Approving or encouraging statements.

### **Reflective listening**

Listening attentively and then demonstrating this by repeating or paraphrasing what you heard.

### **Self-esteem**

A person's self-image and sense of self-worth.

### **Self-soothe**

The ability to calm yourself.

### **Validation**

Listening and responding in a way that shows that you respect a person and take them and their feelings seriously.





# Web links

## ***Tuning in to Kids and Tuning into Teens* programs**

**[www.tuningintokids.org.au](http://www.tuningintokids.org.au)**

Information and resources about the *Tuning in to Kids* and *Tuning in to Teens* Emotionally Intelligent Parenting Programs.

## **The Gottman Institute**

**[www.gottman.com](http://www.gottman.com)**

The Gottman Institute works to help create and maintain greater love and health in relationships. It is committed to an ongoing research program that supports the understanding of relationships and development of interventions that have been carefully evaluated. The institute aims to make all services accessible to the broadest reach of people across race, religion, class, culture, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

## **Faber and Mazlish**

**[www.fabermazlish.com](http://www.fabermazlish.com)**

This website includes resources from authors Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. They studied for 10 years in parent groups with the late child psychologist, Dr Haim Ginott, who was the main inspiration for John Gottman's research (see above) on emotionally intelligent parenting. Faber and Mazlish's internationally acclaimed books: *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk* (two million copies sold); *How To Talk So Teens Will Listen & Listen So Teens Will Talk*; and *Siblings Without Rivalry* (#1 on The New York Times Best Seller List) have been translated into many different languages.

Faber and Mazlish are former faculty members of the New School for Social Research in New York and Family Life Institute of C.W. Post College, Long Island University.

## **The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)**

**[www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)**

CASEL is an international collaboration of educators, scientists, policymakers, foundations and citizens promoting social and emotional education and development in schools.

## **6seconds – Emotional Intelligence Network**

**[www.6seconds.org](http://www.6seconds.org)**

6seconds supports the development of emotional intelligence in schools, homes and communities. The site has articles, resources and free information and an online store. 6seconds publishes the Self-Science curriculum and other materials for schools and families; provides training for teachers, parents and trainers; and runs educational programs for children.

## **Emotional Intelligence Information**

**[www.unh.edu/emotional\\_intelligence](http://www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence)**

Scientific information about emotional intelligence, including relevant aspects of emotions, cognition and personality.

## **EQ.org – [www.eq.org](http://www.eq.org)**

A comprehensive directory that supports people interested in developing emotional competence to find the resources they need.

### **Raising Children**

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

Useful information for parents and carers about a range of child development issues.

### **Other useful websites on family, youth health and parenting**

#### **Strong Bonds: Building Family Connections**

[www.strongbonds.jss.org.au](http://www.strongbonds.jss.org.au)

A website developed by Jesuit Social Services with useful information to help you to support your young person through hard times, so that you can keep making a difference to their health and wellbeing.

#### **Child and Youth Health**

[www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)

A South Australian Government website with a wealth of practical information relevant to the health and wellbeing of families, children and young people.

#### **Headroom**

[www.headroom.net.au](http://www.headroom.net.au)

A South Australian Government website with information about mental health and wellbeing for young people and their parents.

### **Headspace**

[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

Headspace is the national youth mental health foundation. Their website contains information about mental health and wellbeing for young people and their parents.

### **Inyahead**

[www.andrewfuller.com.au](http://www.andrewfuller.com.au)

An informative and entertaining website for parents and adolescents.

Andrew Fuller is a clinical psychologist who works with many schools and communities in Australia and internationally, specialising in the wellbeing of young people and their families.



# Useful books for parents

*The Heart of Parenting: How to Raise an Emotionally Intelligent Child.* John Gottman (1997), Bloomsbury, London.

*How To Talk So Teens Will Listen & Listen So Teens will Talk.* Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (2005), Collins.

*Raising Emotionally Intelligent Teenagers.* Maurice J. Elias, Steven E. Tobias and Brian S. Friedlander (2000), Harmony.

*Building Emotional Intelligence.* Linda Lantieri (2008), Sounds True Inc. New York. (This book comes with a CD of relaxation and meditation for children.)

*How to Talk So Kids will Learn, in Home and at School.* Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (1996), New York Fireside, New York.

*Siblings Without Rivalry.* Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (1987, 1998), Avon Books, New York.

*Loving Each One Best: A Caring and Practical Approach to Raising Siblings.* Nancy Samalin with C. Whitney (1996), Bantam Books, New York.

*Raising Real People: Creating a Resilient Family.* Andrew Fuller (2002), ACER Press.

*Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation.* Daniel Seigel (2010), Bantam Books, New York.

*Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting.* Mayla Kabat-Zinn and Jon Kabat-Zinn (1997), Hyperion, New York.





# Opportunities to connect

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 or 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.

Please add ways that you connect with your teen:




# Group leader role-play – Being dismissive: Mum and Isabel

- Mum: Isabel. It's time for school.
- Isabel: (grumbling) I don't want to go. I hate school.
- Mum: No you don't Isabel. You normally love school. Come on, I haven't got long. I've got a meeting to get to this morning (in a matter-a-fact tone).
- Isabel: No. I hate it. Why do you always tell me what I like? You don't listen to me.
- Mum: Don't be ridiculous. I listen to you all the time. Why don't you want to go?
- Isabel: (storms off to her room slamming the door.)
- Mum: (starting to get angry) Come on Isabel, I haven't got time right now. Get your stuff. We need to go.
- Isabel: (comes out of her room, kicks the kitchen stool and storms out to the car, yells) 'I'm coming!!'

They drive to school in silence, neither talking about what has happened.



# Group leader role-play – Emotion Coaching: Mum and Isabel

- Mum: Isabel. It's time for school.
- Isabel: (grumbling) I don't want to go. I hate school.
- Mum: What, you hate school? Mmm ... that doesn't sound too good. Has something happened at school?
- Isabel: No. I just don't want to go.
- Mum: Oh, I see. Sounds like you are not feeling very good about school right now.
- Isabel: No. It's just Trisha. (looking sad)
- Mum: Oh, dear. (touches her on the shoulder) Sounds like something has been happening with her.
- Isabel: Yeah, she's splitting up our friends, and she thinks I am the cause of it all.
- Mum: Oh. That seems so unfair when you look after your friends so well. I bet it's disappointing when she's like that. I wonder if you're feeling a bit worried about seeing her?
- Isabel: Yeah.
- Mum: Maybe we can talk about it a little more in the car? It sounds like a lot has been happening.
- Isabel: Mmm ... okay. Maybe. But I don't always want to talk about things Mum.
- Mum: Yes, I know. I'll leave it up to you if you want to talk some more.

They go off to school ...





# Being dismissive: Dad and Jimmy

- Dad: Jimmy, you're pretty quiet over there. You alright?
- Jimmy: Yeah fine.
- Dad: You sure?
- Jimmy: I said I'm fine. (in grumpy voice)
- Dad: Sorry I asked. I was just trying to help.
- Jimmy: I didn't ask for your help.
- Dad: (in an irritated voice) Settle down! I was just trying to ask why you're looking so sad for yourself.
- Jimmy: Whatever! (walks away)



# Emotion Coaching: Dad and Jimmy

- Dad: Jimmy, you're pretty quiet over there. You alright?
- Jimmy: Yeah fine.
- Dad: You sure?
- Jimmy: I said I'm fine. (in grumpy voice)
- Dad: Okay. (pause) You look a little down right now. I was just wondering if there's something going on.
- Jimmy: Nah, nothing really. I'm just pretty sick of everything.
- Dad: Oh. Sounds tough. (pauses) Is it anything to do with friends at school?
- Jimmy: Yeah, I'm so over it. They just crap on and I don't want to hang out with the idiots anymore.
- Dad: Anyone done anything in particular?
- Jimmy: Yeah. They keep teasing me and saying that I'm gay.
- Dad: Sounds like you're feeling really hurt.
- Jimmy: It's not like I don't want a girlfriend. But my friends say I'm useless with girls and that I must like guys.
- Dad: Teasing can be so hurtful. But there's nothing wrong with being gay, or liking guys. Your cousin Martin is gay, and he's pretty cool isn't he?
- Jimmy: Yeah, Marty's great. It just makes me feel bad when they say I am.
- Dad: For some reason, guys often say someone's gay when they want to make that person feel left out, or bad about themselves. I remember it happened to me when I was at school. I wasn't too confident with girls myself at the time, and getting teased didn't help.
- Jimmy: I wish I could just ignore it.
- Dad: Yeah. That's the best thing. Once they see you don't react, it gets boring and they go for someone else. But ignoring it can be hard.
- Jimmy: Yeah, that's what I've gotta do. But I feel like punching them sometimes!
- Dad: Yeah, you've got to get that angry stuff out somewhere else. How about a kick of the footy?

# Turning towards and sitting with

Two key concepts when Emotion Coaching teens are 'turning towards' your teen when they show signs of wanting connection, and 'sitting with' their emotions when they share their experiences.

## Turning towards

You often need to wait for the opportunity for teens to share their emotional experiences. With this age group, you're not always the one who determines timing. The following pointers might help:

- During the day parents are often so busy that we miss opportunities for connecting – be aware and ready to respond.
- Teens might put out 'bids' for emotional connection (asking for attention, expressing interest, attempting conversation or seeking approval) in very subtle ways. This can include statements about problems and dislikes, seemingly irrelevant statements ('Wow! That's a cool bike!') or non-verbal actions (coming into the kitchen and sighing loudly)
- When a teen makes this kind of bid, you have the choice of 'turning towards' ('Yeah, that does look pretty cool!'), 'turning away' (ignoring the statement or talking about something else) or 'turning against' ('I think it looks crap', 'You've got a bike already!')
- 'Turning towards' means becoming more aware of your teen's bids, and showing interest by asking questions, making affirming statements, reflecting what your teen says or showing empathy.

## Sitting with

A crucial part of Emotion Coaching is being with your teen when they are feeling emotions. The following pointers might help create the right environment for your teen to open up:

- Sometimes you need to 'zip up your mouth and sit on your hands'.
- It is often about being quiet and not taking control of the conversation.
- Focus on providing non-judgemental support, acceptance and empathy.
- Often it can be enough to listen quietly or respond non-verbally.



Adapted from Gottman, J. M. & DeClair, J. (1997). *The Heart of Parenting: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.



# A conversation with your teen – happiness and sadness

This week we would like you to talk to your teen about emotions and what they notice when their friends experience happiness and sadness. Choose a time convenient for you and your teen. Let them know you need to do some 'homework' and ask if they could help you. Ask first what they observe when their friends are happy, then what they observe when their friends are sad.

Don't take notes while you're talking to them, but jot down some of what they talked about afterwards and bring your notes to the next session.

<b>What do they observe when their friends are:</b>	
Happy:	
Sad:	
<b>What kinds of physical signs would they notice (body language)?</b>	
Happy:	
Sad:	
<b>Do they have a story that would illustrate this?</b>	

# 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.

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

