

EMOTION COACHING



WHAT IS IT?

- Emotion coaching is about helping children to become more aware of their emotions and to manage their own feelings particularly during instances of misbehaviour. It entails validating children's emotions, setting limits where appropriate and problem-solving with the child to develop more effective behavioural strategies.
- In effect, emotion coaching techniques help children to learn to:
- Self-regulate their emotions and behaviour.
- It enables us to create an ethos of positive learning behaviour and to have the confidence to de-escalate situations when behaviour is challenging.
- Emotion coaching provides a longer-term solutions to children's well-being and resilience.



REGULATION AND RESILIENCE



- We are not born able to regulate
- Emotional regulation is learned
- Well-regulated adults are needed when children/young people experience dysregulation
- The brain is shaped by social experience and strengthened by repetition



INTERPERSONAL CONNECTION: FIVE TO THRIVE FOR LIFE

THIS SEQUENCE CAN HAPPEN IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE



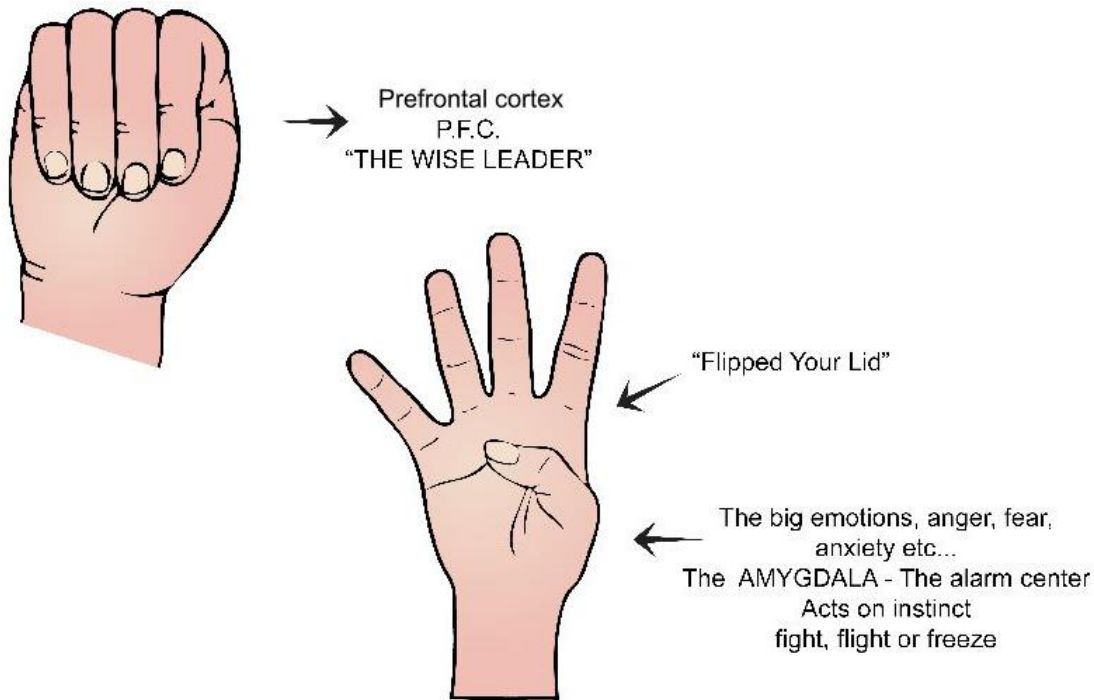
The five key activities which actively maintain brain function through mindful co-regulation and co-learning

- Responding and assessing needs
 - Five to Thrive key word: **RESPOND**
- Connecting and engaging
 - Five to Thrive key word: **ENGAGE**
- Self-regulating stress
 - Five to Thrive key word: **RELAX**
- Being playful: activating the right brain
 - Five to Thrive key word: **PLAY**
- Creating a narrative: activating the left brain
 - Five to Thrive key word: **TALK**



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHILDREN DYSREGULATE? USE YOUR HANDS TO IMAGINE YOUR BRAIN

“Flipping One’s Lid”



Credit: Daniel Siegel, V.D. is the creator of this metaphor and expression “Flipped Lid”. Copyright © 2014 www.sharonelby.com

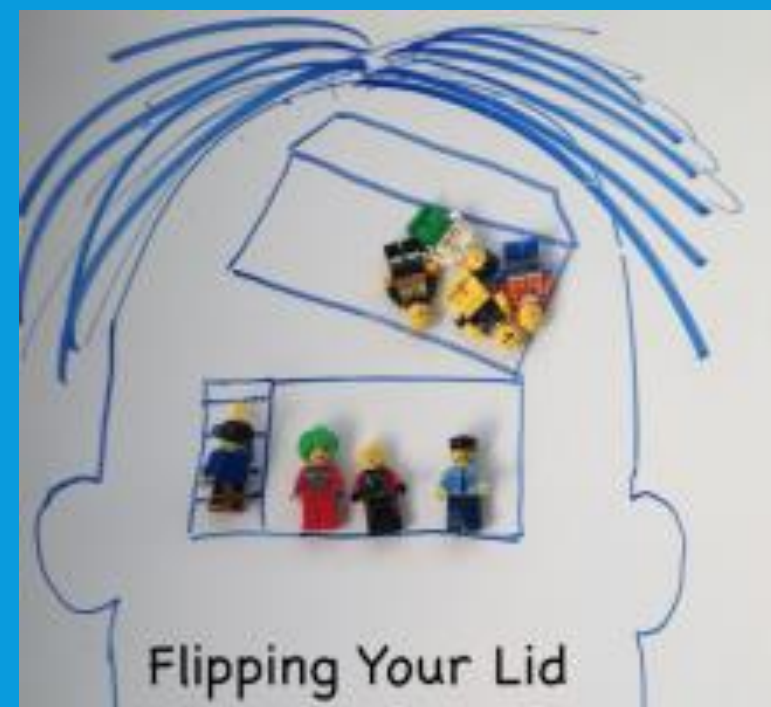
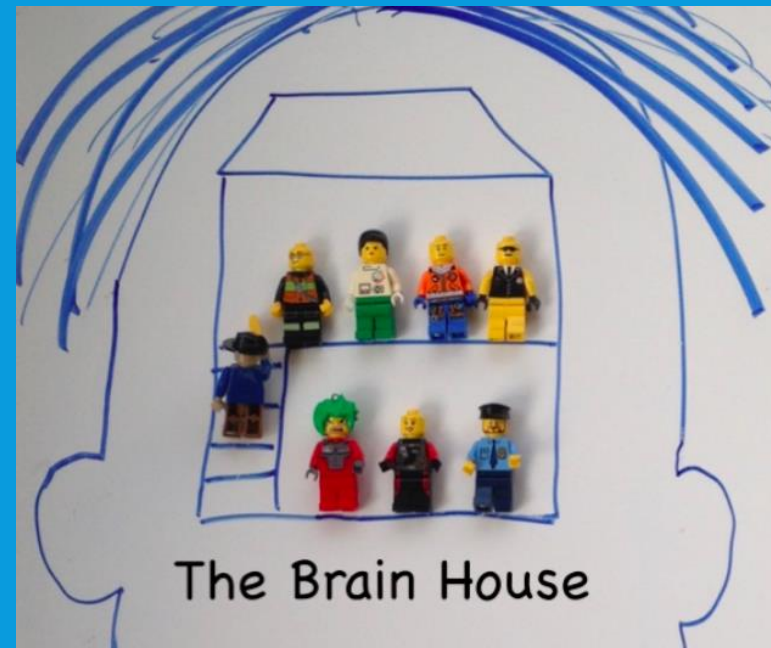
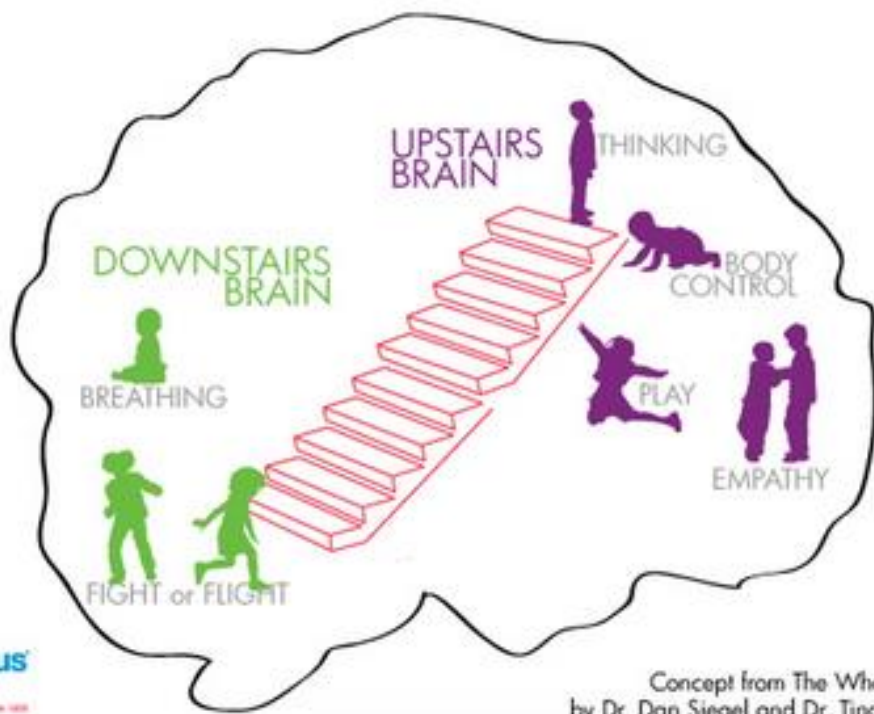
The alarm centre!



Big boss Bootsy!

Picture a brain like a house. Downstairs is where important things live. Basic functions like breathing, strong emotions, and innate reactions to danger, like fight, flight or freeze. It's like the downstairs of a house, which is where we almost always find the basics—kitchen, living room, bathroom.

The upstairs brain is more complex. Thinking, imagining, planning – these things come from the upstairs brain. We use the upstairs brain to think critically, problem solve, and make good decisions. Important to note for those of us working with teens, the upstairs brain is not fully formed until our mid-20s!



IF WE FLIP OUR LID...

... the downstairs brain

- *rapid response*

- Fight
 - Remove the threat
- Flight
 - Remove self!
- Freeze
 - Regress to attract adult help e.g.
 - Immobility, big eyes, smiles, perhaps incontinence

... and the upstairs brain

- *strategies and behaviours*

- Aggression
 - Safety through dominance
- Absence
 - Safety through concealment
- Appeasement
 - Safety through manipulation

...SURVIVING NOT THRIVING

PUTTING THE LID BACK ON

Escalation

- High stress levels...
 - adrenaline, cortisol, etc.
 - rising blood pressure
 - shallow breathing
 - Clenched muscles

- The downstairs brain is in charge

SURVIVAL

De-escalation

- Relax (good vagal tone)
 - oxytocin, dopamine, etc.
 - lowering blood pressure
 - deeper breathing
 - reduced muscle tension

- The upstairs brain is back in action

SAFETY

EMOTION COACHING IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Achieve more

Are more emotionally stable

Are more popular

Gottman's research showed that emotion coached children:

Are more resilient

Have fewer behavioural problems

Have fewer infectious illnesses

SELF-REGULATION AND RESILIENCE

- Emotion coaching promotes healthy brain development while dealing with behaviour in the moment.
- It provides a description to connect feelings, thinking and behaving.

Rewards and sanctions provides:

External frameworks and regulation



Emotion Coaching provides:

Internal frameworks and regulation



EMOTION COACHING INVOLVES...

... a practical 3 step approach to dealing with behaviour in the moment

■ Step 1

- Recognising, empathising, validating the feelings and labelling them (it's ok to feel...)

■ Step 2

- Setting limits on behaviour (as well as getting child's narrative) where appropriate

■ Step 3

- Problem-solving with the child or young person

DISAPPROVING STYLE

Negative emotions are weak and show lack of control; the child needs to 'toughen up'

Lacks empathy and instead, is **critical** and/or **intolerant**

Believes that negative emotions are **used to manipulate**

Uses punishment or discipline to get rid of emotions

Feels the need to **control** and regain power

Notices the **behaviour** but not the emotions

DISMISSING STYLE

Wants the child/ young person to feel better but is **uncomfortable** with negative emotions

Sees negative emotions as 'toxic' and to be 'got over' quickly

Believes paying attention to emotions makes them worse

Reduces or minimizes the emotional experience: "You'll be fine", "It's not a big deal".

Motivated by the need to rescue/make things better: "I'll buy you a new one!"

Uses logic or distraction to get rid of the emotion: "Have a biscuit!"

DISAPPROVING AND DISMISSING MAY SEEM TO WORK, BUT THE ACTUAL MESSAGE IS ...

Can lead to hiding of emotions, less (or no) self-regulation, reliance on distraction to get rid of emotion



The child does not learn to trust their own feelings, which affects their ability to make decisions



"What you are feeling is not right, your assessment of the situation is wrong, you must not feel this way"

They do not have opportunities to self-regulate or problem-solve



Generates more negative feelings – resentment, guilt, shame, anger



They are not given opportunities to experience emotions and deal with them effectively, so grow up unprepared for life's challenges

LAISSEZ FAIRE STYLE

- Occurs when the adult is overwhelmed by the power of the emotions driving the child: there are two flipped lids...



- The adult feels helpless, afraid or distressed
 - Despite the empathy of the adult, the child experiences no safe containment of their emotions
 - The child receives no guidance on how to manage the feelings
- Once the adult is in laissez faire, the behaviour will escalate

HOW DO WE DO EMOTION COACHING?

- Having emotional awareness of own emotions (meta-emotion philosophy)
"Put on your oxygen mask first before putting it on the child"
- Recognising the power and purpose of emotions
- Empathising
- Active listening / relationship building
- Problem solving
- Role-modelling



EMOTION COACHING STYLE: HIGH EMPATHY / HIGH GUIDANCE

Three steps to success:

■ Step 1

- Recognising, empathising, validating the feelings and labelling them
- 'Connection before correction' (Golding et al, 2013)

■ Step 2


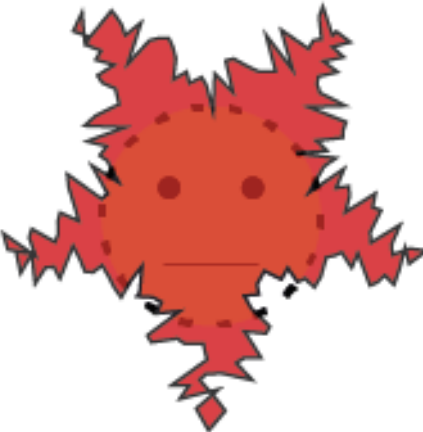
- Setting limits on behaviour (as well as getting child's narrative)
- Rapport before reason
- All **feelings** are **ok** but not all behaviours are ok!

■ Step 3

- Problem-solving with the child or young person





	
self-regulation	dysregulation

Step 1
The adult recognises,
empathises with and
validates the **feelings**
of the child

STEP 1: EMPATHISE, VALIDATE AND LABEL

Child wants sweets at the shops and gets angry when you says no

This is ok and normal

Try to see it from their point of view.
Recognise the emotion

Use words to reflect the child's emotion; help them label it.
I can see that you feel angry...

Talk it through
Next time you feel like this do you think you could try to....
It's ok to be disappointed it's not ok to...

Show you understand this emotion, they aren't alone. Calm them
It's disappointing/tricky but...

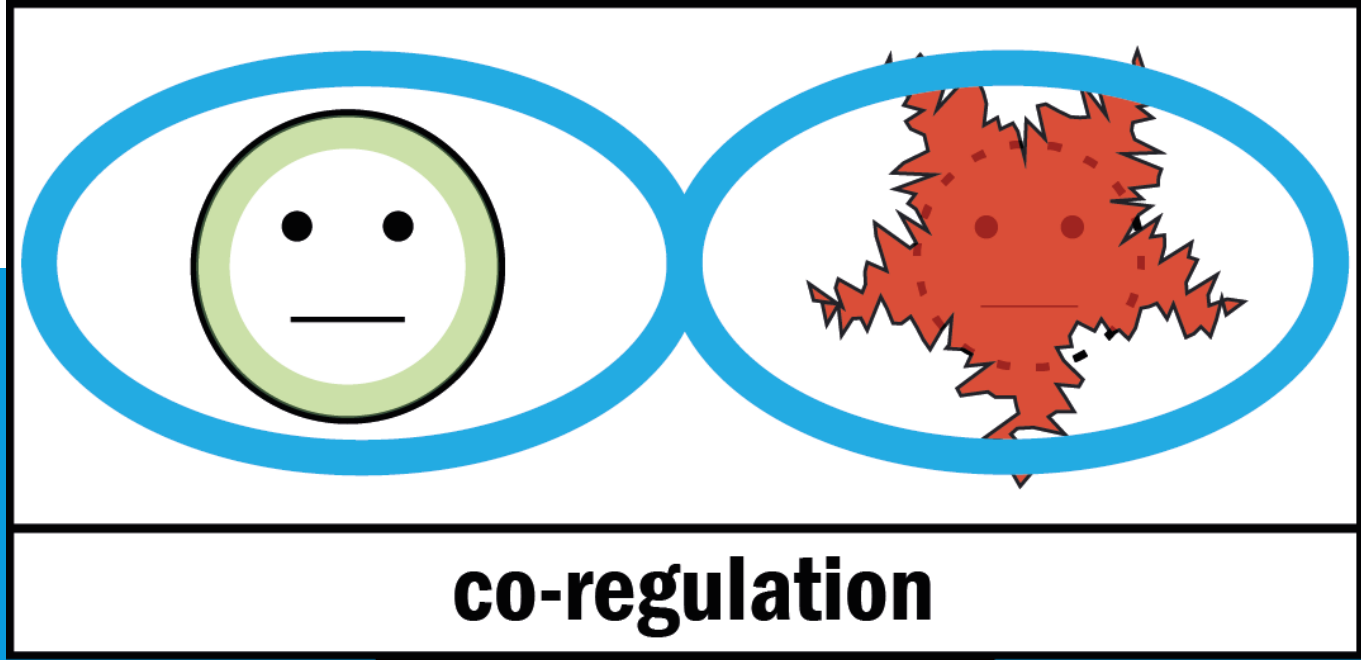
CO-REGULATION

- Establish relationship

Get on a level with the child or young person

The adult should set the emotional tone: **NOT** the adult **reflecting back** the angry or distressed face of the child, but the child being able to reflect the calm and empathic face of the adult





Step 2
The adult empathically sets **limits** on the behaviour of the child




STEP 2: SET LIMITS

Co-regulation comes first.

The adult's relaxation places boundaries around the child's energy – emotional mirroring allows the child to relax and share the adult's emotions...

...then teaching / co-learning can occur

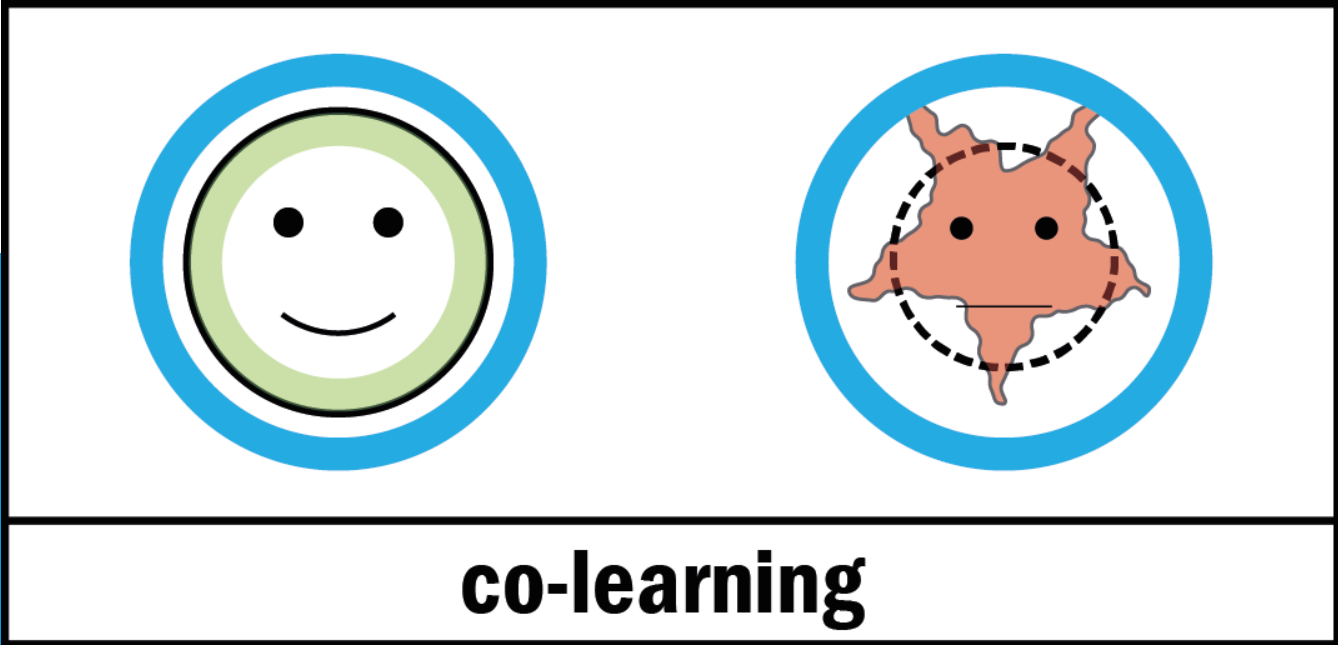
- State the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour.
- Make it clear that some behaviours cannot be accepted but don't shame/embarrass the child



"We need to keep everyone safe..."



"It's not ok to hit people."



Step 3
The adult problem-solves with the child or young person

FTT
PLAY
and
TALK



STEP 3: PROBLEM-SOLVE WITH THE CHILD



self-regulation



self-regulation

Next time....

Could you try....

Let's try this if you feel like that again...

EMOTION COACHING BUILDS...

... trusting and respectful relationships with children and young people

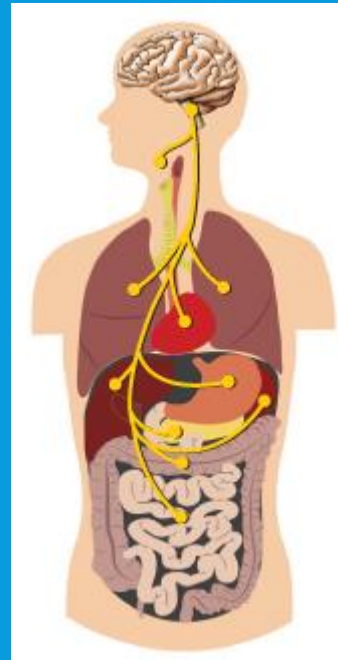
- **The adult trusts and respects the child**

- Engaging emotionally can feel risky, but without co-regulation the child can't develop self-regulation

- **The child trusts and respects the adult**

- Emotional mirroring is more powerful even than the fear felt by vulnerable and traumatised children

... **healthy brains:** science suggests this promotes good vagal tone and develops powerful brain connections



... GOOD FOR THE SCHOOL

Emotion coaching is an evidence and relationship-based approach to dealing with behaviour in the moment that sets every intervention in the context of a respectful relationship

What Emotion Coaching is NOT...

