



Evidence-Based Intervention Template: Emotion Coaching

Introduction

Emotion Coaching is a relational approach developed by John Gottman. It involves an adult recognising, validating and guiding children through their emotional experiences, and aims to support emotional literacy, resilience and positive relationships.

Purpose of Intervention

Emotion Coaching aims to develop emotional literacy skills, including emotional recognition and regulation, to support wellbeing. Emotion Coaching also aims to support positive adult-child relationships.

Target Audience

Emotion Coaching can be used with all children and young people, although the approach and scripts may need to be adapted slightly for different ages and needs. Emotion Coaching can be particularly helpful for children who find it difficult to regulate their emotions.

Who Can Deliver the Intervention

Any adults who interact with children and young people can use Emotion Coaching, including teachers, Learning Support Assistants, pastoral staff, parents and other professionals.

Session Structure

Emotion Coaching does not have fixed sessions, but is a strategy that can be used at natural teaching opportunities as and when they arise.

Frequency and Duration

Emotion Coaching should be used at natural teaching opportunities, and the duration of these interactions may vary, depending on the situation.

Key Principles

The structure of Emotion Coaching is as follows:

1. Develop an awareness of the child's emotions.
2. Recognise emotion as an opportunity for teaching and relationship building.
3. Listen empathetically and validate the child's emotions.
4. Help the child to verbally label their emotions.
5. Set limits (if needed) while helping the child to problem-solve.

Training and Implementation

Implementation of Emotion Coaching would usually begin with a training session on the theory and practice of Emotion Coaching (around a half day). We would then suggest that staff engage in ongoing CPD around Emotion Coaching, for example taking part in reflective practice groups to consider the impact of using the approach.

Evidence and Outcomes

Rose, McGuire-Snieckus and Gilbert (2015) found that Emotion Coaching:

- Increases adult self-regulation.
- Reduces disruptive behaviour and improves pro-social behaviour in pupils.
- Reduced the need for rewards and sanctions in supporting behaviour.



- Promotes the development of social and emotional skills within pupils.
 - Encourages positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- Gus et al. (2017) found that Emotion Coaching:
- Improves pupil emotional regulation.
 - Enhances teacher-pupil and family-school relationships through shared emotional language and trust.
 - Improves wellbeing of pupils and staff.
 - Supports academic progress of pupils.

Feedback from School Staff

“the Pastoral Officer has been implementing it with Y9 and I have to say it has been very successful already ...it has had a real positive impact on the students. We’ve got quite a large number of girls...they struggle to manage their emotions... they are currently going through friendship issues. I think it [Emotion Coaching] is more for us to know how to handle it and that’s been really valuable for me to understand what is best to do to support them with regulating their emotions...and the language...being a good role model- being calm and receptive to what they are saying.”

“confidence is certainly growing...it’s becoming more like a habit...just kind of instinctual, especially with the script.”

“it’s nice to have a script as well because if we’re all using the same language, I think it’s kind of more powerful and it empowers the teacher.”

About the reflective log

“I think it gives you an opportunity just to reflect because sometimes, particularly in an AP [Alternative Provision], things move very quickly and we kind of move from a situation to a situation. And I think it just almost forces you to take that time to reflect.”

Further Information and Resources

- [Emotion Coaching UK](#)
- [Introduction Video](#)
- [A Pocket Guide to Emotion Coaching](#)
- [The Gottman Institute](#)
- [Emotion Coaching with Children and Young People in Schools: Promoting Positive Behavior, Wellbeing and Resilience by Louise Gilbert, Licette Gus and Janet Rose.](#)
- Rose, J., Gilbert, L., & McGuire-Snieckus, R. (2015). Emotion Coaching-a strategy for promoting behavioural self-regulation in children/young people in schools: A pilot study. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 13, 1766-1790.
- Gus, L., Rose, J., Gilbert, L., & Kilby, R. (2017). The introduction of emotion coaching as a whole school approach in a primary specialist social emotional and mental health setting: Positive outcomes for all. *Open Family Studies Journal*, 9(Suppl-1, M3), 3-18.
- Gilbert, L. (2024). Promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) in settings through emotion coaching practice: a model of engagement for practitioner use. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2024.2402735>