Emotion Coaching



By Lisa Lee & Ershen Mehmet

Aim of the session:

To explain the what, why, where, when, and how of emotion coaching

How we will deliver this



Emotional Coaching

Adele was surprised by her school English teacher during her performance ian wright emotional coaching – YouTube

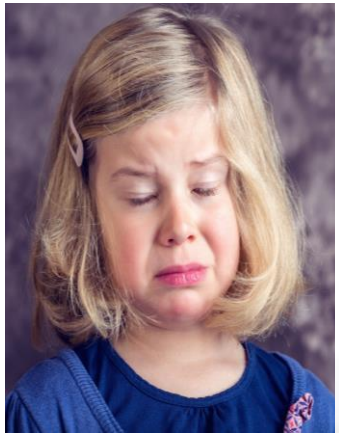
Who was there for you?

Who made a difference to you during your childhood?



Forming attachment and attunement

Name the emotions…



Distress/Sadness



Fear



Anger



Surprise



Disgust



Joy/Happiness

- 6 emotions that are observed across cultures and countries.
- Our emotions are natural, normal and hardwired for our survival.

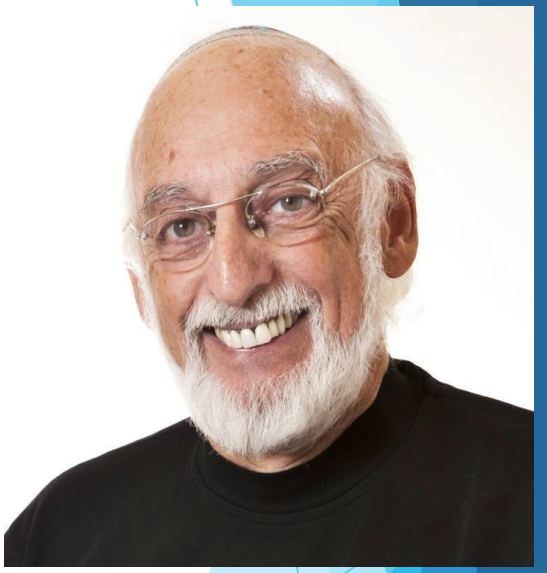
Have you heard of Emotion Coaching?

What is Emotion Coaching?

- Using moments of heightened emotion, and resultant behaviour, to guide and teach children about their emotions and about more effective responses.
- Reacting with empathy and care to children's emotional states to support their own emotional regulation.
- Based on the principle that emotions are natural and normal; it's what we do with them that counts.
- Drawing from neuroscientific research on the link between brain, emotions, the body and behaviour.

Research behind Emotion Coaching

- Founded by US psychologist Dr John Gottman (1997)
- This program was originally created for parents and was formed by observation not created and is considered as a universal tool for all.

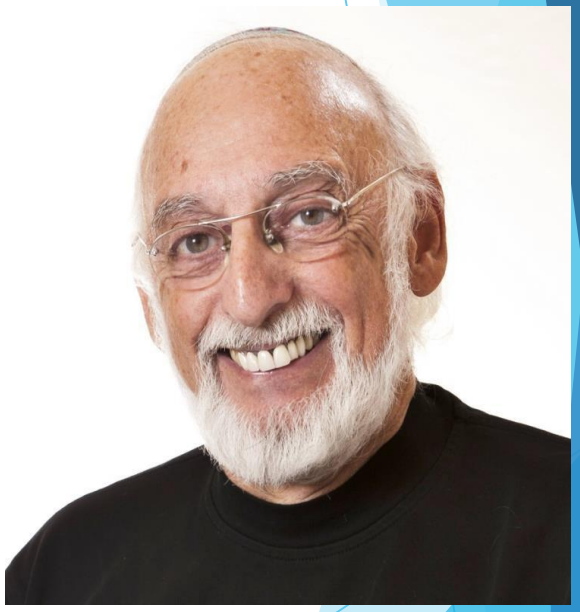


- Created in UK by Dr Janet Rose and Louise Gilbert (2015)

Why use Emotion Coaching?

Gottman (1997) found that Emotion coached children could:

- Regulate their own emotional states
- Be better at soothing themselves when upset
- Calm down their hearts faster
- Had fewer infections and illness
- Be better at focussing attention
- Relate better to other people (even in challenging social situations, for example being teased)
- Were less prone to acts of violence
- Be better at understanding people
- Be better at forming relationships
- Be better at academic performance



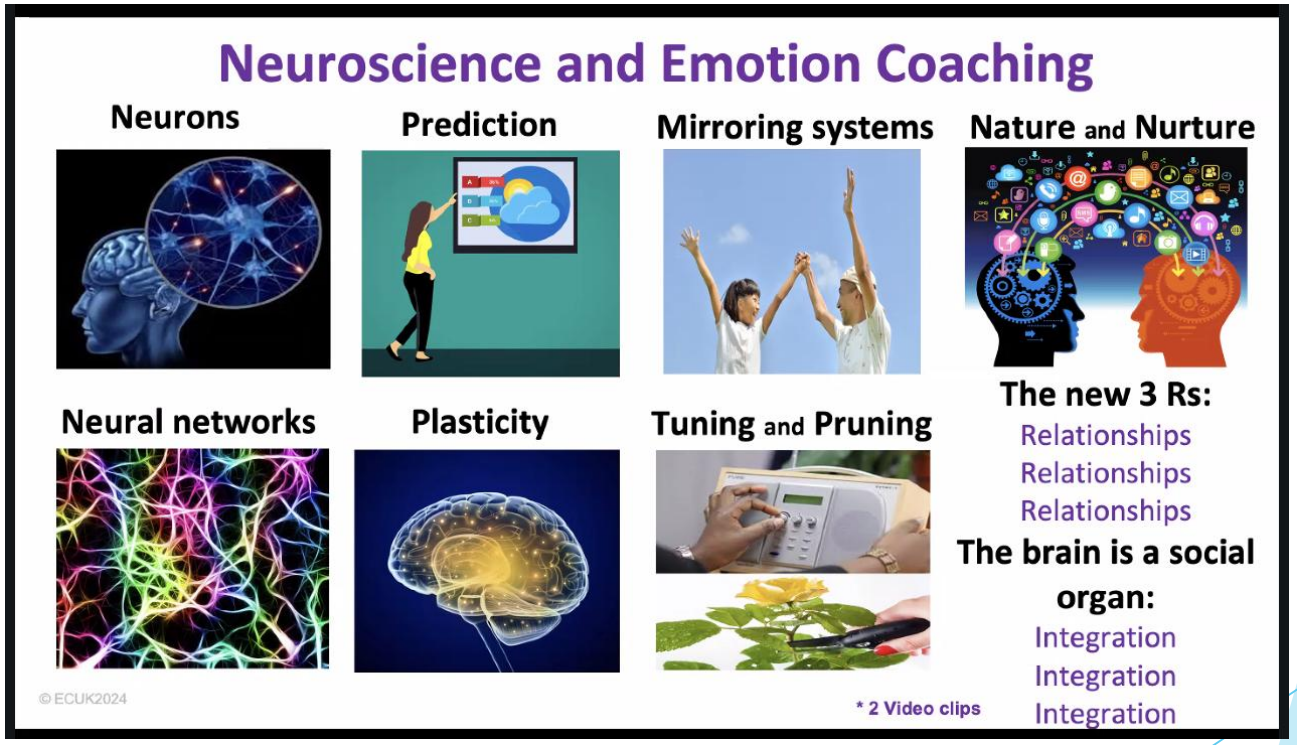
Why use Emotion Coaching?

Research findings demonstrate that emotion coaching helps the adult to:

- be more sensitive to children's needs
- be more consistent in responses to children's behaviour
- feel more 'in control' during emotional incidents
- promote positive relationships with their children

The Neuroscience of Emotion Coaching

Emotional Coaching

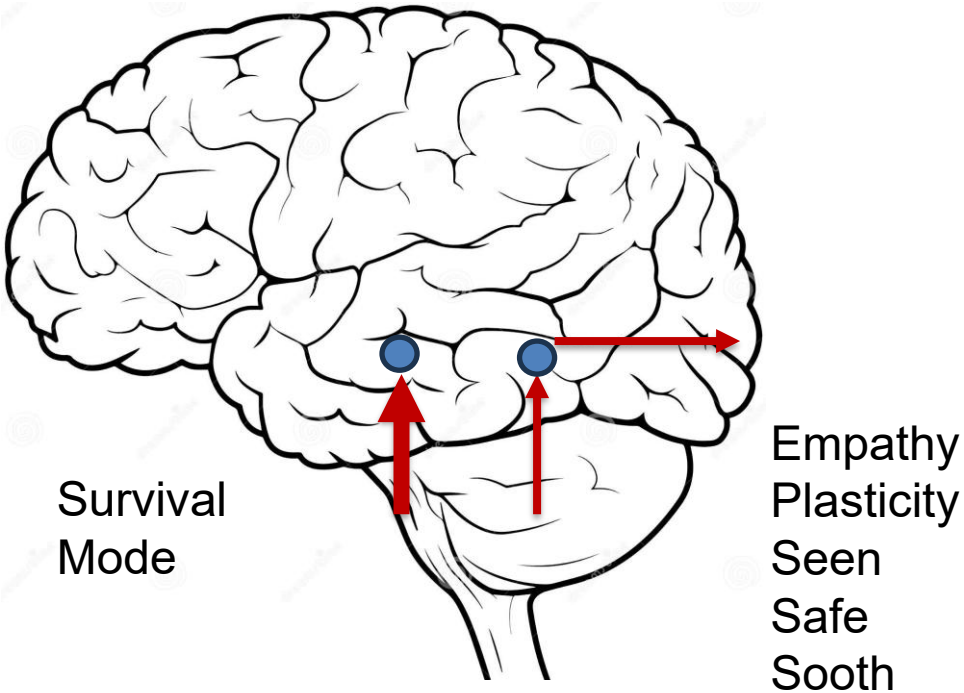


Emotional Coaching

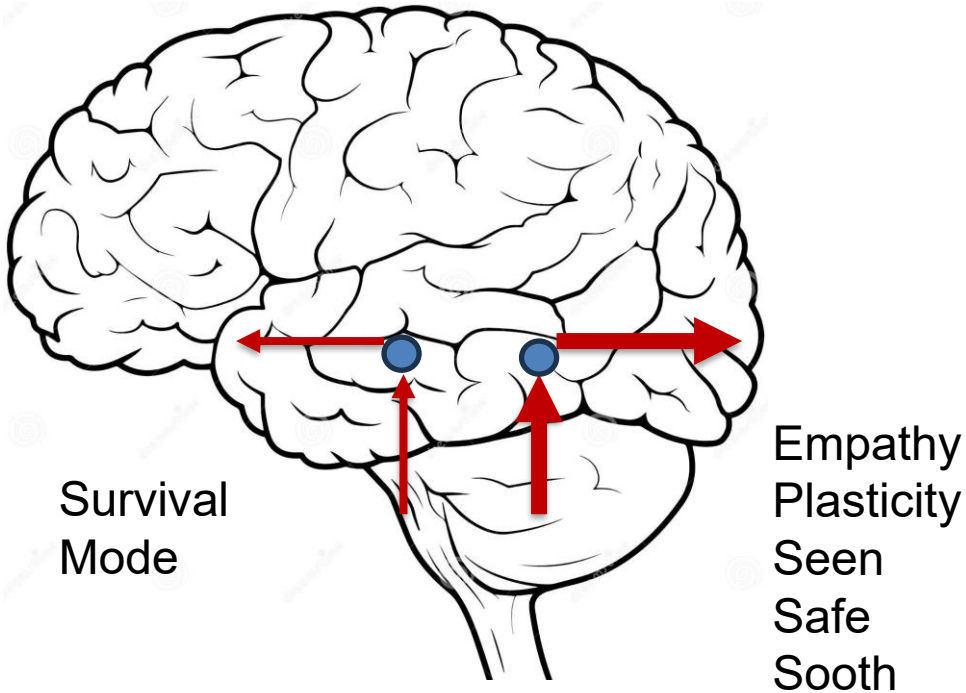
Experiences Build Brain Architecture - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University



Emotional Coaching



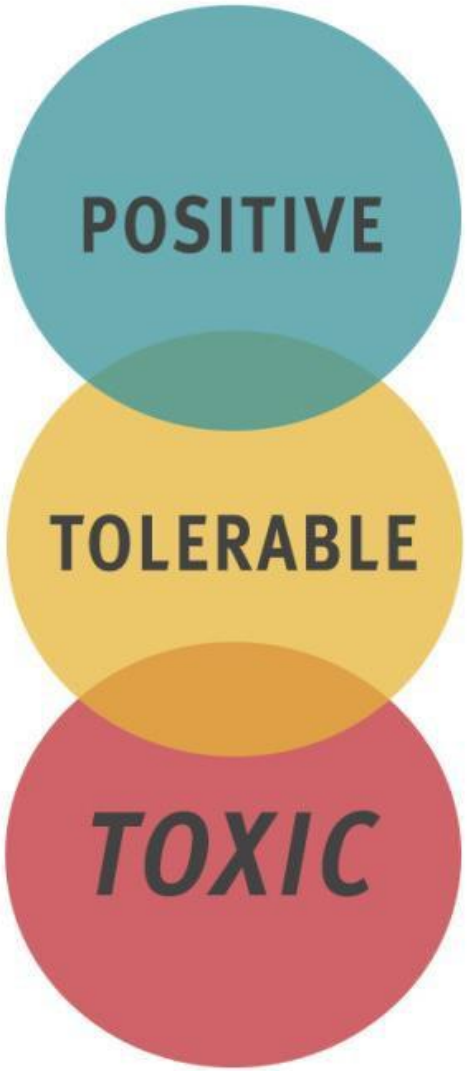
Emotional Coaching



Homeostasis
The stable environment

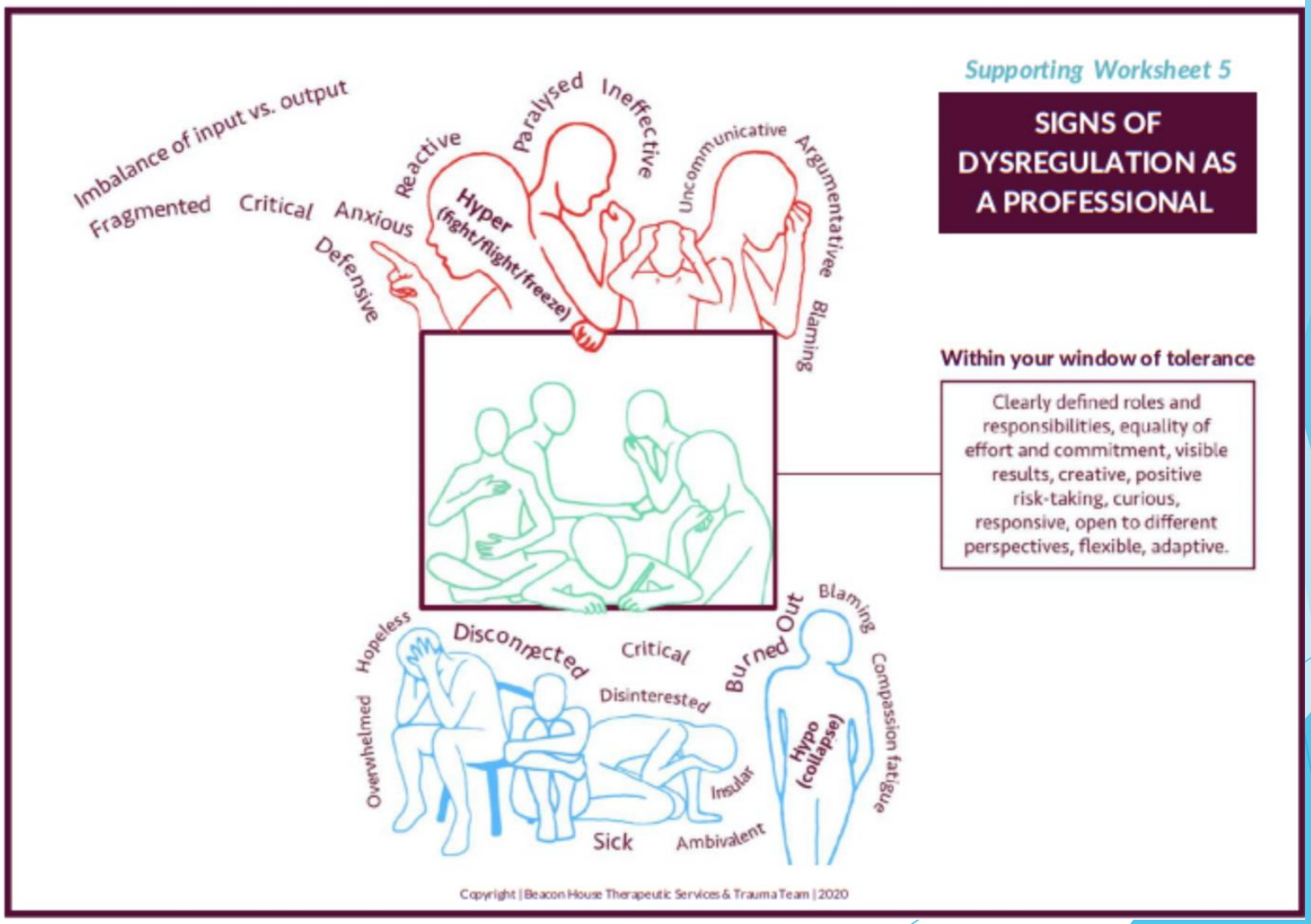


Types of Stress

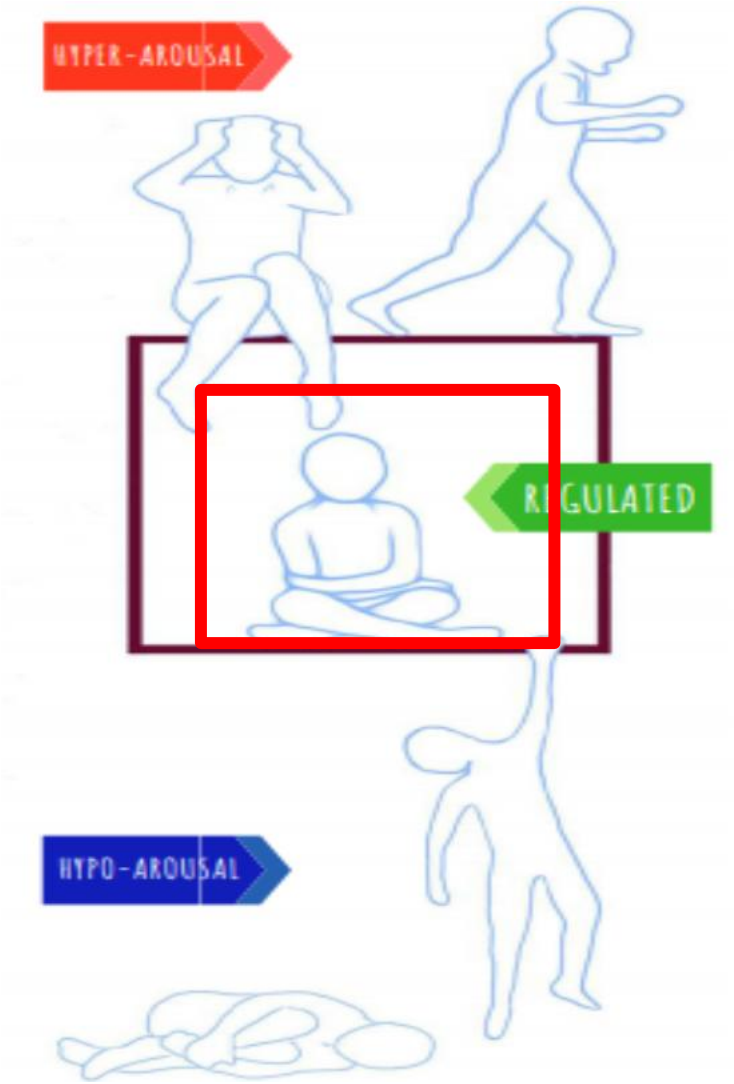


- Develops skills to cope, essential for healthy development. Buffered by consistent, supportive, reliable adults, short-lived and manageable. Over time and through repetition resiliency develops.
- Stressors more prolonged and serious and body's stress response activated to a greater degree. If limited and buffered by consistent, supportive, reliable adults, the child can recover.
- Stress response continually activated by stressors that are strong, frequent and prolonged with inadequate supportive relationships or adverse environments.

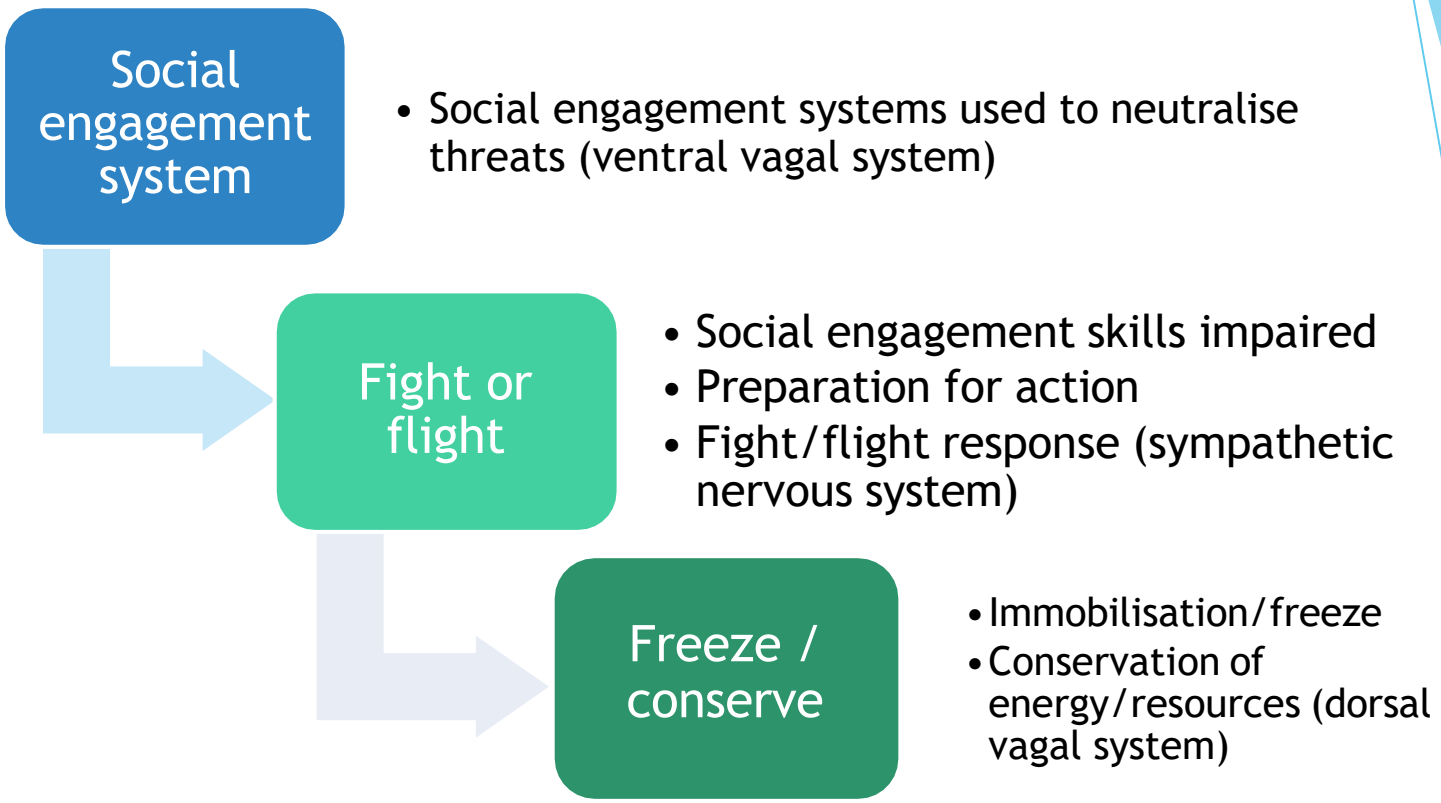
Window of Tolerance



Window of Tolerance



Poly-vagal theory



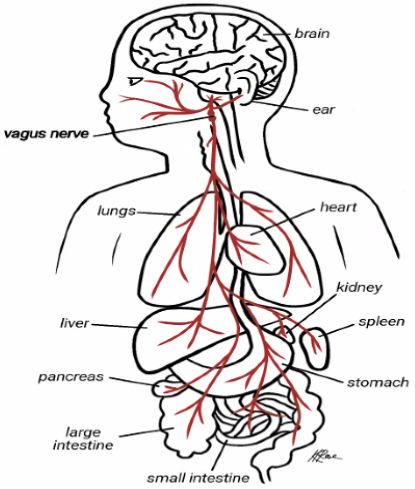
- When responding to emotionally-based behaviour, we must take account of the activated system that the person is operating within.
- To regain homeostasis, we must move back up through one system at a time.
- Resilience and wellbeing is reflected in an individual who can move with ease through the different systems, rather than being stuck.

Emotional Coaching

Reaction and Response when the stress or threat is over…

The vagus nerve, which connects with most organs in the body, acts as a **natural 'brake'** to help return bodily functions back to 'normal' after a stress response

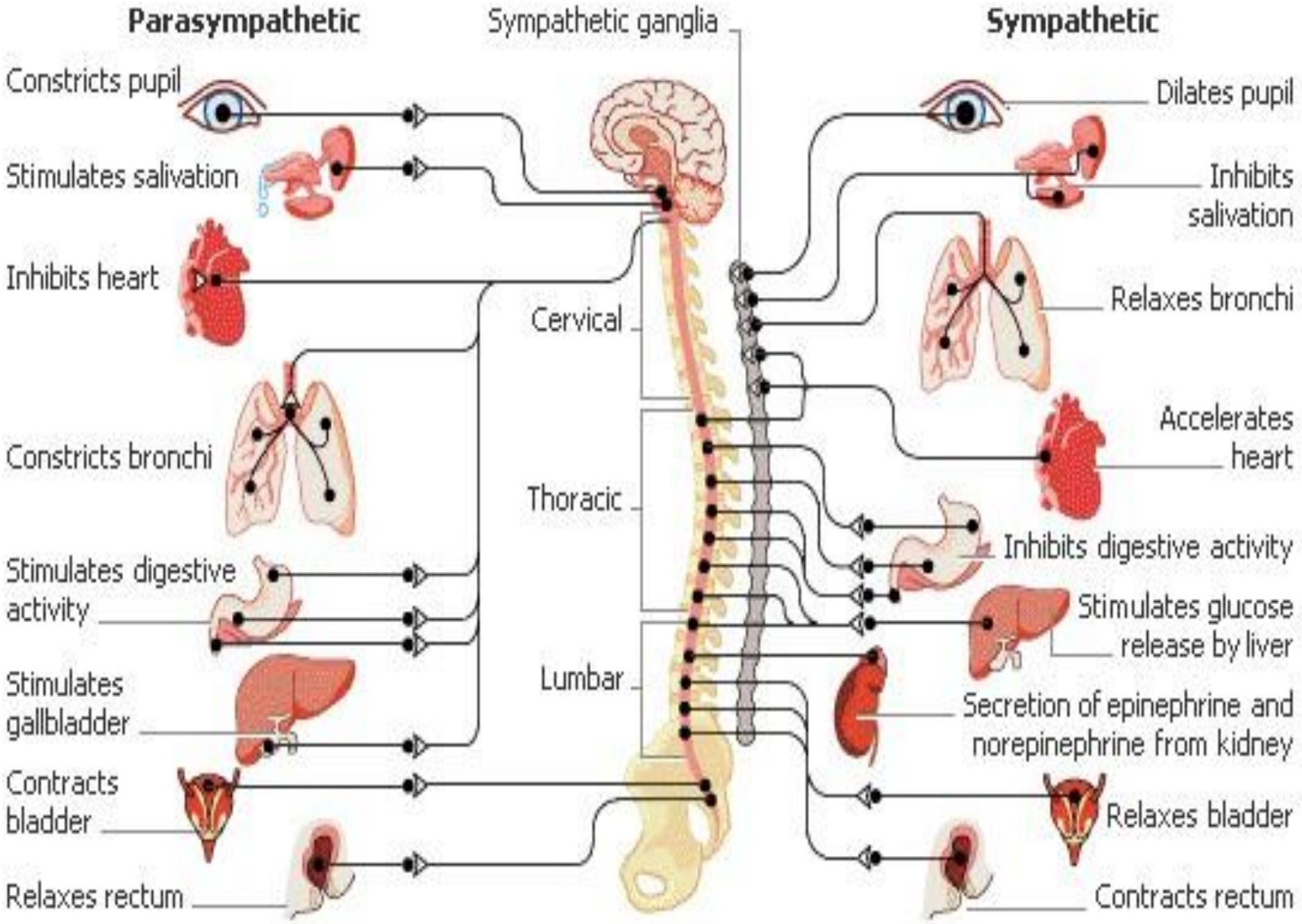
It allows social engagement to reoccur



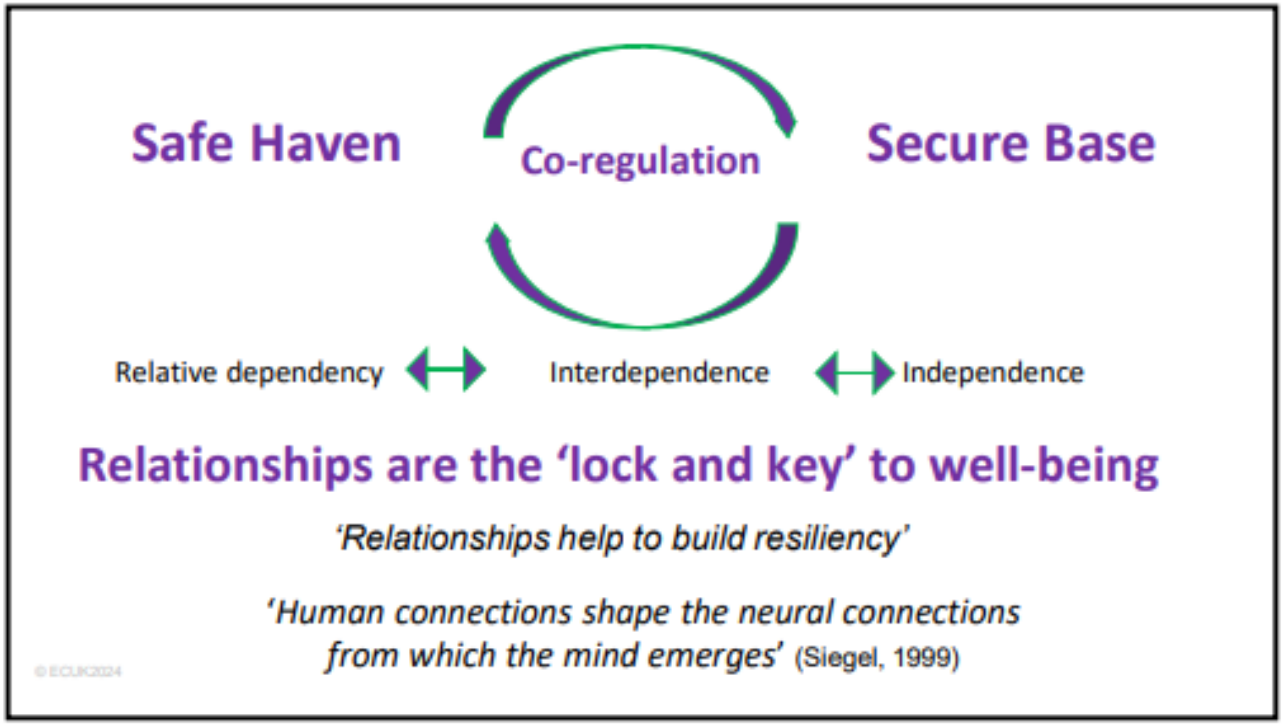
THE VAGUS NERVE

© ECUK2024

[Monkeystack]


Parasympathetic
Sympathetic ganglia
Sympathetic
Constricts pupil
Stimulates salivation
Inhibits heart
Constricts bronchi
Stimulates digestive activity
Stimulates gallbladder
Contracts bladder
Relaxes rectum
Cervical
Thoracic
Lumbar
Dilates pupil
Inhibits salivation
Relaxes bronchi
Accelerates heart
Inhibits digestive activity
Stimulates glucose release by liver
Secretion of epinephrine and norepinephrine from kidney
Relaxes bladder
Contracts rectum

Emotional Coaching



[The Attachment Theory: How Childhood Affects Life - YouTube]

[5 points to Co-regulation]

Approaches to managing emotions

Meta-Emotion Philosophy



= **The thoughts and feelings we have about emotions** (in general, in self and in others)

Discussion Point:

- Identify some of the messages you received from your own parents, siblings, extended family, carers and others about emotions.

- How might the experiences effect responses to children's emotions?

Activity: Role play

- In pairs, take turns to read page 17 in the scenarios.
- Each person take the role of either adult or child. Keep that role for each of the scenarios.
- In your pair, discuss how you felt in your role in each scenario.

Styles in Managing Emotions

- Emotion Dismissing
- Emotion Disapproving
- Laissez-faire
- Emotion Coaching

Dismissing (distracting) Style



- Ethan Dismissing
  - Despite good intentions (wants to make child feel better) is uncomfortable, fearful, anxious, hurt, annoyed or overwhelmed by negative emotions
  - Wants negative emotions to go away quickly
  - Considers paying attention to such emotions will make them worse, prolong them
  - Tries to stop negative emotions by reducing/ minimising/ making light of their importance/significance e.g. it's no big deal, don't worry about it, be a big girl, that's life, you'll be fine
  - Often motivated by need to rescue and make things better, fix the problem e.g. 'have a biscuit', 'I'll buy a new one', 'you need to do this'
  - Focuses on getting rid of the emotion with logic or distraction rather than understanding the feelings

Disapproving Style



© 2005 Ross Young

Ethan Disapproving

- Disapproves of negative emotions – viewed as a sign of weakness, lack of control, unconstructive
- Lacks empathy, noticeably critical and intolerant
- Tries to get rid of negative emotions via discipline, reprimand, punishment
- Focuses on the behaviour rather than the emotions generating the behaviour
- More likely to view negative emotional displays as a form of manipulation, lack of obedience, sign of bad character
- Often motivated by need to control and regain power and/or to 'toughen up' child

Laissez-faire Style



Ethan Laissez - Faire

- Freely accepts all emotional expression from the child.
- Offers comfort to the child experiencing negative feelings.
- Offers little guidance on behaviour.
- Does not teach the child about emotions
- Is permissive; does not set limits.
- Does not help the child solve problems.
- Does not teach problem-solving methods to the child.
- Believes there is little you can do about negative emotions other than ride them out.
- Believes that managing negative emotions is a matter of hydraulics; release the emotion and the work is done.

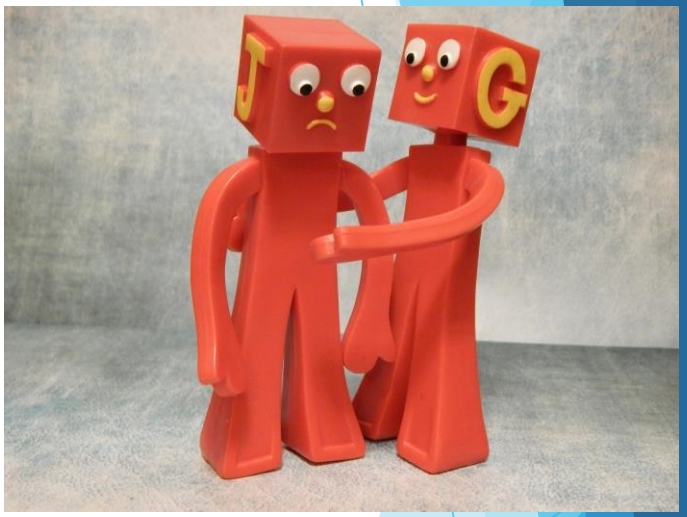
Effects of dismissing and disapproving styles

- Child learns ‘what I am **feeling is not right**, my assessment of the problem is **wrong,** I must not feel this way’
- Child does **not learn to trust own feelings** affecting decision-making
- Not given **opportunities to experience** emotions and deal with them effectively so grow up unprepared for life’s challenges
- Not given opportunities to **self-regulate or problem-solve**
- Can lead to **suppression of natural emotions**, less or lack of self- regulation, reliance on distraction to get rid of emotion
- Generates **more negative feelings** - resentment, guilt, shame, anger

Emotion Coaching Style

Ethan Emotion Coaching

- Teaching children about the world of emotion '***in the moment***'
- Giving children ***strategies*** to deal with ups and downs
- Accepting negative emotions as ***normal***
- Using moments of negative behaviour as ***opportunities for teaching***
- Building ***trusting and respectful relationships*** with children



Step 4:How to Emotion Coach

The 4 steps of Emotion Coaching

- Step 1

Recognising the child's feelings and empathising with them

- Step 2

Validating the feelings and labelling them

- Step 3

Setting limits on behaviour (if needed and appropriate)

- Step 4

Problem-solving with the child

Step 1: Recognise and empathise

- Recognise all emotions as being ***natural and normal*** and not always a matter of choice
- Recognise behaviour as communication
- Look for physical and verbal signs of the emotion being felt
- Take on the child's perspective (mentalising/ mind-mindedness)
- Affirm and empathise, allowing to calm down

Why is step 1 so important?

"Proposing solutions before empathising is like trying to build the frame of a house before you lay a firm foundation" (Gottman)

- Emotional first aid is needed first
- Emotion coaching builds a ***power base*** that is an emotional bond – ***this creates a safe haven, a place of trust, a place of respect, a place of acceptance, a sense of self*** *etc.*
- This in turn leads to children and young people ***giving back*** respect, ***acceptance*** of boundaries, etc.

CONNECT BEFORE RE-DIRECT (Siegel, 2013)
RAPPORT BEFORE REASON (Riley, 2009)

John Gottman believes empathetic listeners……..

- Use their *eyes* **to see/identify** physical evidence of the childs emotions, such as a suddenly reduced appetite.
- Use their *ears* **to hear** the underlying message behind what a child is saying.
- Use their *imaginations* to **put themselves** in the child's shoes to understand how they're feeling.
- Use *words* to **reflect back** what they hear, see and imagine in a soothing and non-judgemental way
- Use their *hearts* **to feel** what the child is feeling.

Empathy and Emotion Coaching

- **Affective or Emotional Empathy:**

Recognizing how the child is feeling

- **Cognitive Empathy:**

Understanding their perspectives and validating **their emotional experiences**

- **Compassionate Empathy:**

Working with others to help them

Brené Brown on Empathy vs Sympathy

Listening to Fix

- **This type of listening surfaces when the speaker expresses a problem or tough situation and often the reflexive response from the listener is:**

  "I know the answer here"

- **This form of listening is common for those who view themselves as a helper or who have a desire to help others.**

- **Since we have a sincere desire to help and offer advice, simply "listening" doesn't feel enough.**

Listening to Learn

- When we listen to learn we manage the part of our brain that seeks to respond and jump to conclusions and problem solving to allow the other person to share openly *'how it is for them right now'*, so ensure we're hearing them correctly.

- Listening to learn gives emotional instead of technical support

- Listening to learn allows the 'other person' to feel 'seen, safe, soothed and secure' with you enough to 'let down' and calm their defenses and to openly vent, worry, complain, share anxieties, or whatever they're needing to get off their chest.

Step 2: validate and label

- Validate the emotion and acknowledge its existence
- Use words to reflect back child's emotion
- Help child/ young person to label emotion
- Provide a narrative/translation for the emotional experience (creating cognitive links)

Step 3: Setting limits (If needed)

- Safety first
- State the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour
- Make it clear certain behaviours cannot be accepted
- But retain the child's self-dignity (Crucial for responsive behaviour and well-being)

Are we ready?

- Prior to implementing Step 4, establish if the vagal nerve has been activated:
  - Safe Place or Regulation Station
  - Provide Time and Space
  - Sensory support – water, breathwork, compression exercises, grounding

Step 4: Problem-solving with the child

- When the child is **calm** and in a relaxed, rational state:
  - **Explore** the feelings that give rise to the behavior/problem/incident
  - **Scaffold** alternative ideas and actions that could lead to more appropriate and productive outcomes
  - **Empower** the child to believe s/he can overcome difficulties and manage feelings/behaviour

Tools: Contingency Mapping / Comic Strip Conversations to provide visual support

Emotional Coaching & Regulation

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