

Emotion Coaching using Zones of Regulation for Families

By Leicestershire Virtual School

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Emotion Coaching for Families

- Developed in the US by psychologist Dr. John Gottman (1997)
- Emotion coaching teaches children (and adults) to ‘put the lid back on’ and helps them to learn from experience so they begin to self-regulate.
- children of parents who emotion coach are physically healthier, do better in school, and get along better with friends. Emotion coaching parents followed five basic steps to help their children with emotions. Sometimes this can take a great deal of time.



Parenting Styles

John Gottman observed how parents respond to their children's emotions. He found that parents respond to children's emotions in four possible ways.

Dismissing



Dismissing parents see children's emotions as unimportant and attempt to eliminate them quickly, often through the use of distraction.

Disapproving



Disapproving parents see negative emotions as something to be squashed, usually through punishment.

Laissez-faire



Laissez-faire parents accept all emotions from child, but fail to help the child solve problems or put limits on appropriate behaviours.

Emotion Coaching



Emotion coaching parents value negative emotions, are not impatient with a child's expression of them, and problem-solving the issue at hand.

Emotion Coaching in 3 steps

Step 1

Be aware of your child's emotions and your own

- Recognise all emotions as being natural and normal
- Look for physical and verbal signs of the emotion being felt
- Take on the child's perspective
- Use words to reflect back the student's emotion and help them to label the emotion
- Empathise, helping to calm down through co-regulation
- Provide a narrative for the emotional experience, creating cognitive links through co-learning

Step 2

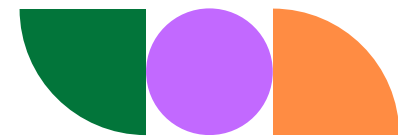
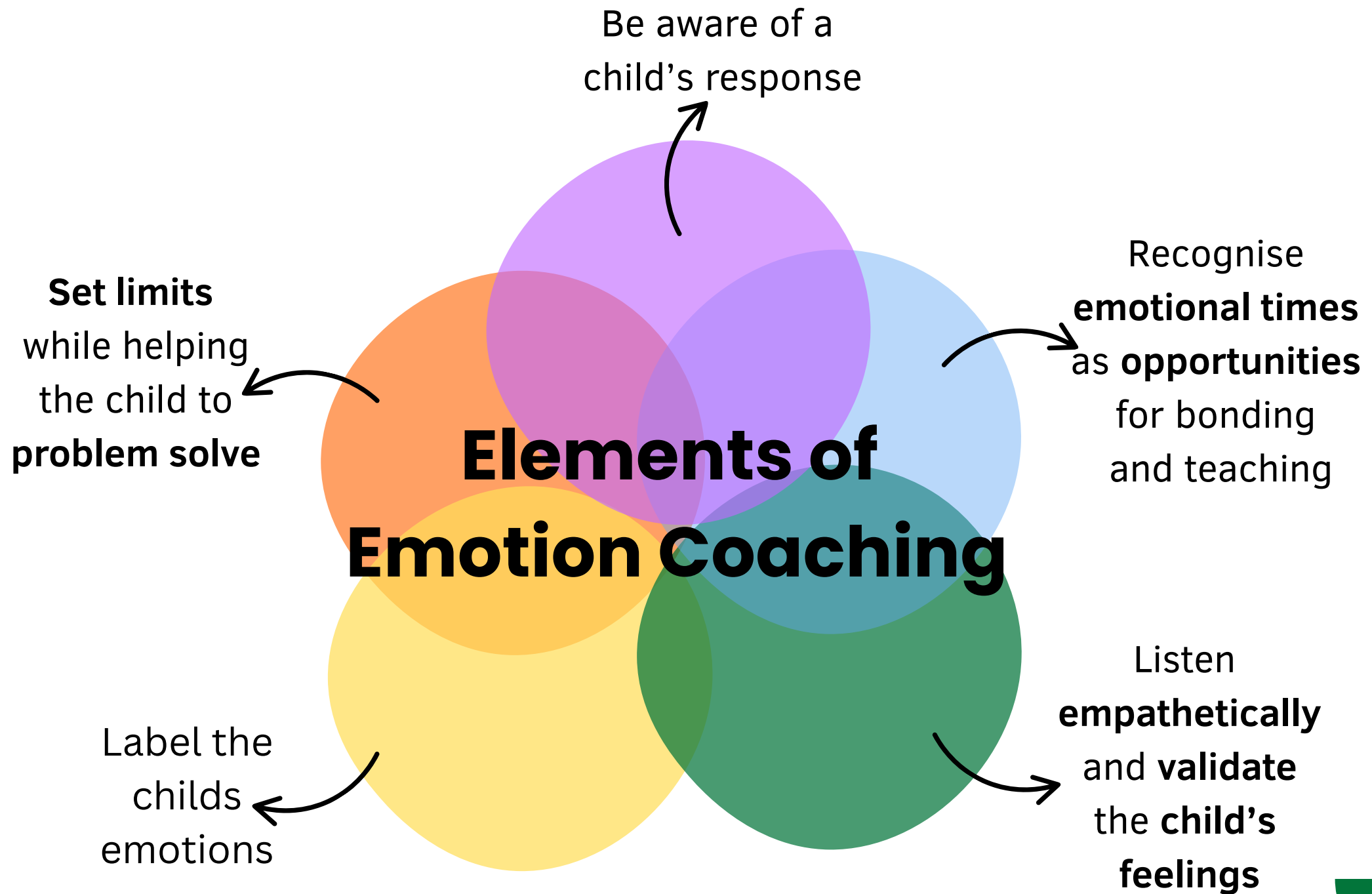
Then teaching / co-learning

- State the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour
- Make it clear that some behaviours cannot be accepted

Step 3

When calm and in a relaxed and rational state

- Explore the feelings that gave rise to the behaviour, problem, or incident
- Scaffold alternative ideas and actions that could lead to more appropriate and productive outcomes
- Empower the young person to believe they can overcome difficulties and manage their own feelings and behaviour



Our emotions can be divided into four coloured zones:

Blue

Low energy and
motivation to
participate

Green

Attentive and
feeling positive
overall

Yellow

Uncomfortable
and needs to
focus

Red

Full of negative
emotions and
may react
harshly



How this may look:

- I slouch and sigh.
- I yawn with eyes half-closed.
- I move slowly.
- I can't settle on an activity

What you need to do:

- Stretch and take a walk around.
- Do an activity to refocus
- Drink some water

The

Green zone



How this may look:

- I am joining in.
- I see and hear everything clearly.
- I smile and respond politely.

What you need to do:

Keep it up.
You are doing
great!





How this may look:

- I squirm and fidget in my seat.
- I cannot pay attention.
- I frown and seldom talk.

What you need to do:

- Talk to someone about how you feel, or write it down.
- Do an activity to help re-focus.
- Close your eyes and count slowly.



How this may look:

- I glare and my eyebrows are furrowed.
- I scream or yell.
- I stomp angrily.

What you need to do:

- Pause and take deep breaths.
- Ask for help if needed.

Remember: Emotion Coaching in 3 steps

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Step 2

Then teaching / co-learning

State the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour

Make it clear that some behaviours cannot be accepted

Step 3

When calm and in a relaxed and rational state.

Explore the feelings that gave rise to the behaviour, problem, or incident

Scaffold alternative ideas and actions that could lead to more appropriate and productive outcomes

Empower the young person to believe they can overcome difficulties and manage their own feelings and behaviour

Your Script to get started...

Step 1

“It looks like you are...”

“I can see that you are...”

“I wonder if you are feeling...”

Step 2

“Now you need to...”

“However it’s not ok to...”

“How can I help you to get back to the green zone?”

Step 3

“What could you do next time?”

“How can you avoid that situation?”

“How can you repair the situation?”

Scenario 1:

During a heated discussion, Alex feels insulted when a sibling makes a sarcastic remark. He clenches his fists, his face flushed with anger, ready to confront the person.



Scenario 1:

Alex is livid with anger! He is currently in the **red zone**.
How can he go back to green?

Alex



What can Alex do to get back into the green zone?

Take a break and express his feelings when he's feeling calmer

Scenario 2:

Tisha



On a rainy Saturday, Tisha lays on the couch, unable to gain the energy to be productive. She scrolls through her phone, feeling tired and lethargic, despite having no plans.

Scenario 2:

Tisha is feeling lethargic and sluggish.

She is currently in the **blue zone**. How can she go back to green?



What can Tisha do to get back into the green zone?

Hydrate herself and have a healthy snack

Do an activity to reset

Scenario 3:

Shane



Shane is about to give a presentation in front of his class. He feels a knot in his stomach and starts to sweat, concerned about stumbling over his words or forgetting key points.



Scenario 3:

Shane is feeling anxious and worried. He is currently in the **yellow zone**. How can he go back to green?

Shane



What can Shane do to get back into the green zone?

Practice deep breathing and visualise himself successfully delivering the presentation

What emotions do we feel each day?



