

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Children who have faulty templates have fundamental problems with self-awareness and accurate assessment of self and others.

Rebuilding Emotional Awareness

Children with faulty templates:

- Give confusing signals
- Inflict pain on others to 'show who's boss'.
- Pairing of pain and closeness seems acceptable to them.
- Include negative behaviours with their positive signals for friendships – ashamed when challenged.
- Self awareness is not developed to the extent that they reflect on their behaviours unless they are assisted.
- Carers must challenge their behaviours so that friendship skills are not paired with friendship-defeating behaviours.

Why they miss emotional signals

- With infants parents mirror facial expressions exaggerating the child's feelings and send it back guiding them to know what facial expression goes with what feeling. (Children who have experienced neglect/abuse may not have had this.)
- Lack of ability to read cues for comprehending the meaning of their own and others' facial expressions. They miss the meaning of expressions.
- Anxious parents mirror distress and do not teach modulation.

Why they ignore emotional signals

- Parents who turn faces away teach children to ignore emotional information.
- Best done in an active instructional manner that ends with children doing things the right way.
- Slowing children to pick up emotional information helps to curb the drift towards disrespect.

Matching facial expressions to inside feelings

- Have neutral or even positive expressions when in hostile surroundings eg 'freeze' in trauma.
- Use the same bland look when confused and overwhelmed – misleading.
- Need to match inside feelings with the face.
- Can practice in a mirror.
- Using expressions to manipulate.
- Need to identify the looks that are being used to control adults.
- Put appropriate photos on the fridge.
- Role playing

Eye Contact

- Ask for eye contact – miss positive facial expressions when they avert their eyes.
- They are 'letting their parent's smiles fall to the floor'.
- Ask not to look at parents and tell me what they think they will see – 'That she will be mad'.

Using breaks and steering

- Stop children who are practicing insensitivity.
- Music and PE classes are often not good for children who need high structure.
- Prone to movement towards dangerous situations.

Inappropriate use of body stance and space

- Children who shrink from physical contact are often crowding others' space and digging into parents.
- Need to model positives for friendships – not fighting.
- Consequences when intentionally pose in an intimidating manner.
- Need help about space.
- 55% is expressed through facial, postural and gestural means.
- 38% tone of voice.
- 7% in words.
- Practice responsive smiling.
- Coaching to try new strategies – practice looking friendly.
- Smiling at other children with eye contact needs to be encouraged – need to rehearse at home.
- Having a friendly but not submissive body stance can be practiced.
- Mimic a dominating stance and a submissive stance.
- Mimic giving space for others to talk.

Summary of techniques to use

- Creating self-awareness
 - Encouraging the appropriate face/expressions for the feeling.
 - Encouraging him to read other people's cues and facial expressions.
 - Encourage children to do it the 'right' way – need the practice.
 - Encourage empathy towards others.
 - Discourage misleading facial expressions eg – bland look when confused and overwhelmed.
 - Need to match inside feeling with face – practice in a mirror.
 - Need to identify the looks that are being used to control adults.
 - Put photos on fridge of appropriate facial expressions of child.
 - Role playing.
 - Stop him when he is acting insensitively – tell him what is motivating the behaviour.
 - Do not allow crowding of others' place or 'digging' into parents.
- Working on more appropriate behaviour to create friendships.
 - Need to reflect on his behaviours
 - Become aware of his friendship-defeating behaviours.

- eg talking about how trying to 'show he is boss' – inflicting pain on others.
 - Need to look at how you stand – not a fighting posture – as this is how others will see you. Show him how he stands and give an alternative stance.
 - Practice looking friendly and smiling at other children with eye contact.
- Ask for Eye Contact
 - Tell him he will miss positive expressions when he averts his eyes. He is 'letting the parent's smiles fall to the floor'. He must see them.