

Emotion Coaching

1 Validation Level & Goal of Interaction

Listen Non-Judgmentally **AND ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION**

- *"I notice you seem sad – you're hunched over and your head is down"*
- *"Sit down with me – what's going on?"*
- Ask questions - "What then?" Give prompts - *"Tell me more," "Uh-huh."*
- Overall show interest in him (through verbal, nonverbal cues), show that you are paying attention (nodding, eye contact, etc.)

2 Accurate Reflection

- Reflect on what he is saying, without adding any interpretation (E.g., *"So you're frustrated because..."* Then ask - *"Is that right?"*. Remember, you're not evaluating the accuracy, merit or usefulness of their thinking, just reflecting what is. (Example: *"I hate myself"* Reflection: *"You hate yourself because.....and that makes you feel....."*)
- Note: that you don't have to actually agree with him.)

Articulate Unspoken Thoughts and Feelings – REFLECT WHAT'S UNDERNEATH

- ## 3
- Try to "read" or imagine the feelings, thoughts and fears that might be underneath his statements. To uncover underlying thoughts, you can ask questions like *"What are you worried it will mean if this happens? What do you think it says about you that this happened?"* Then, to uncover the underlying associated emotions, you can ask how thinking this way makes him feel (this should elicit more underlying emotions like shame, disappointment, hurt, hopelessness).

*Remember to check for accuracy. It is best to not make assumptions. (Example: *"I hate myself"* Reflecting what's underneath: *"When you lost your lego piece, it made you think you can't do anything right. Like you're always making mistakes or doing something wrong. And that made you feel...."*)

VALIDATE HIS/HER FEELINGS

- ## 4
- Let him know it makes sense he would think/feel/act this way given:

- His past learning/history (e.g., *"It makes sense you feel this way because I think you feel that you're not good at things and that you've made a lot of mistakes"*)

- What's important to him (e.g., *"You don't want to feel like a failure. You just want to feel good about yourself. It's so important to you that you do everything right"*)

You can also validate:

- His positive intention for his actions or lack of negative intention (e.g., *"I know you didn't mean to do this"*)

- How his feelings make sense given his interpretation of the situation (e.g., *"No wonder you feel so mad at yourself. You think that when you lost your lego piece, that meant you can't do anything right"*)

- How out of control his feelings feel (e.g., *"I know your feelings feel really strong right now, maybe you feel like you can't control them"*)

EMPATHY

- ## 5
- Provide empathy for his experience of the situation, while trying to avoid making it about your own emotions (E.g., *"It must be so so hard to think this way about yourself"*)

OFFER A CUE OF AVAILABILITY

- ## 6
- Let him know you're the bigger, stronger, wiser and kinder parent – you can handle his big feelings and you're going to help him get through them.
 - E.g., *"How can I get you through this?"; "I'm here for you"; "I'm going to stay right here with you to help you through these feelings"*

ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS/ACTIONS

- ## 7
- Once his feelings have calmed, you can help him come up with different ways he could interpret the situation. *"Next time you have these feelings, what could you do instead?"*