

Emotional Intelligence - The Handout

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One's Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, is a better predictor of success than IQ, yet we rarely think about developing our own or the emotional intelligence of others around us.

Key Components of Emotional Intelligence

1. Self-Awareness

- a. Naming your emotions and moods
- b. Body - what is happening in your body (sick, tired, nervous, tension, where are you feeling it?)
- c. Understand WHO you are - personality, motivations, drive, gifts, abilities, weaknesses. There is a comfortability in who you are and who you are not.
- d. Self-Confidence, but not taking yourself too seriously (ability to laugh about yourself.)

2. Self-Regulation

- a. The ability to control one's emotional and impulses
- b. The ability to stop and think before acting
- c. People that have a high level of self-regulation are trustworthy
- d. High Integrity - they are able to ask themselves and talk themselves through situations in order to act in a way that is congruent with what they believe.
- e. An ability to wait, be patient (FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE - ability to hold difficult emotions without acting in an unhealthy way)
- f. Openness to Change - look and scanning for learning opportunities
- g. Setting boundaries to take care of oneself BEFORE there are problems.

3. Internal Motivation

- A. As we grow in Emotional Intelligence, we are able to internally motivate ourselves, rather than looking for motivation from outside forces (punishment, money, external rewards).
- B. This looks like doing things because it is important, there is joy in something, or a curiosity in learning.
- C. This includes being able to name goals and persist in their completion.
- D. People with a high internal motivation are generally optimistic, even seeing the good in obstacles, failures, and setbacks.

4. Empathy

- a. Empathy is where Emotional Intelligence reaches outward to impact and help others.
- b. The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people.

- c. This is the ability to look at a person's background, personality, personal situation, and tailor it to fit what is happening in their environment.

5. Social Skills

- a. This is the ability to interact with others in a healthy way. They have good relationships.
- b. The discovery and highlighting the strengths of others.
- c. They are able to make friends, build rapport, find common ground, and build networks
- d. People that excel in social skills make great team leaders, encouraging team members, and great friends & family members

Emotional Intelligence is important because we live our life with ourselves and others. We spend 100% of the time with ourselves. I know it's a funny statement, but the healthier we are, the more likely we are to have joy, healthy relationships, and impact others for the better.

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Emotional Intelligence and Children: Helping Others Regulate Their Feelings

The 5 components of Emotional Intelligence listed in Daniel Goleman's book, "Emotional Intelligence" are:

1. Self Awareness
2. Self Regulation
3. Internal Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social Skills

Why is Emotional Intelligence important for Children?

- Better able to handle challenging situations (friendship struggles, bullying, dilemmas at school)
- Better friendships
- Perform better academically
- Have fewer behavior problems
- More successful as adults
- Able to be compassionate and helpful
- Better leaders
- Become more resilient
- Able to deal with sadness, anger, and other difficult emotions in healthier ways, rather than looking for unhealthy ways of being comforted.

Many times, we think of parenting children in terms of wanting obedient and well-behaved children, but this is just the beginning of what we can be helping our children in their development. We also want to raise children who are responsible, aware, and loving. Again, we are with ourselves 100% of the time. The more we can be emotionally healthy and intelligent, the better our life and relationships will be.

1. Help them to KNOW by NAME their feelings
 - a. Just by you seeing and recognizing their feelings and perceptions, you are showing them that they are not alone. This builds trust and a sense of belonging and connection.
 - b. What is happening in their body? (sick, tired, nervous, tension)
 - c. What feeling is it? Mad? Sad? Jealous? Happy?
 - d. Children are taught through modeling.
 - e. Teach by asking and naming what you think it might be
 - f. Show examples of others (TV, family members, situations they encounter).

2. Help them to HANDLE their feelings
 - a. Preschoolers and School Age - Challenges are bigger than their ability to deal with them.
 - b. Simply naming one's emotions enables the brain to handle them better. In naming the emotions, the brain is activated in the area that allows problem solving to be more readily accessed.
 - c. Teach them to ask the questions:
 - What do you/I need?
 - What can I do to help myself with this feeling or situation?Asking your child this helps them move from a place of inactivity to a place of proactivity.
 - d. Teach How to Soothe Yourself" - hug stuffed animal, snuggle mom or dad, breathe, swim or other water activity, etc.
 - e. Talk about challenges in the moment, after, and before anticipated problems.

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John Gottman States - Parents are “Emotional Coaches”

What does an “Emotion Coach” do?

1. Empathy - Care about your child and become aware of the child's emotions.
 - a. A child's feelings can look differently than an adult's.
 - b. Try to match their level of emotion when talking to them.
 - c. Story of Emotional Teenager - Dad talking abnormally loud to match the teenagers, immediately put out the fire of the irritation the teenager was voicing.
2. Recognize the emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching.
 - a. Realistically, this step is difficult because parents are busy. We are rushing, rushing, rushing, and finding the perspective of a negative emotion as an opportunity is REALLY CHALLENGING!
 - b. So, slow down. Ask yourself what is more important: being a little late to soccer, or helping your 6 year old through feeling scared about soccer practice.
3. Listen empathetically, validating the child's feelings.
 - a. This is called reflecting. What you are doing here is that you want to make sure you understand, you are helping them hear themselves, and you are building a bond with them that you are there for them.
4. Help the child find words to label the emotion he or she is having. When a child has language for their experience, you have given them more confidence to begin to help themselves.
5. Set limits while exploring strategies to solve the problem at hand.
 - a. Identify goals
 - b. Problem Solve - Help the child with this rather than imposing what you think right away. Give space for them to think.

What does an Emotional Coach do in a situation where a child is feeling an emotion that may not be “rational” to the parent?

1. Regardless of how much an emotion makes sense for the parent, the child is feeling it. Values the child in that moment enough to spend the energy helping them.
2. They name what they see or “mirror” what the child said even if you don't understand.
3. They can tolerate the difficulty of the moment no matter how challenging, scary, or annoying the problem is.
4. They don't try to change the child's reaction before connecting to them.
5. Does not make light of their difficult emotions, even when they don't “Make sense”.
6. Offers guidance and help in soothing.
7. Sometimes just through the process of discussing it, it helps the problem solving part of the child's brain to become activated and they can more readily see the part that was exaggerated. This happens more and more as a child is coached on their emotions.

It's really important for parents, as Emotional Coaches, to do a few things:

1. Know themselves
2. Take care of themselves
3. Monitor the emotional and relational temperature of the home

Preschoolers in particular are so needy. They need all of the time. It is physically and emotionally exhausting to parents in this time period.

I have had adult and teenage clients who sit on the couch in my office and the level of emotional coaching differs so much. I have had clients say that their parents completely disregarded their difficult emotion. They feel unseen. They feel disconnected, and it is more difficult for them to trust themselves and others.

I have had other clients say, "My mom just gets me. Even when I didn't know myself as a child, she knew me." That is what we want to aspire to as Emotional Coaches.

There is a wonderful movie out by Pixar called, "Inside Out". It is about a girl and goes inside her brain to see a cast of characters that are her emotions: Joy, Anger, Sadness, Jealousy, and Fear. It is a wonderful resource to educate and discuss emotions, memories, challenging situations, and relationships with your child.

Many references are from "Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child" by John Gottman.

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