

# Emotion Coaching



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# Four Types of Parents

1. Dismissing Parents – *sees challenging emotions as unimportant*
2. Disapproving Parents – *uses punishment to squash challenging emotions*
3. Laissez-Faire Parents – *hands off approach, no help or limits for managing challenging emotions*
4. Emotion-Coaching Parents – *values challenging emotions, uses the experience to bond and help*

# So what is Emotion Coaching?

- ▶ Actively listening and attending to what our children are feeling
- ▶ Helping identify and name what our children are feeling
- ▶ Meeting the emotional need in a given moment
  - ▶ anger: help your child communicate needs
  - ▶ sadness: offer your child comfort, give a hug
  - ▶ anxiety: calm your child using relaxation techniques

When faced with an emotional challenge, most of want to move right to “fixing it”



# Validation is NOT...

- ▶ Agreeing with the other person
- ▶ Offering disingenuous support
- ▶ Condoning behaviour
- ▶ Refusing to set limits

# Validation is...

- ▶ Imagining why it would make sense for your child to feel a particular emotion
- ▶ Communicating that understanding with empathy and caring
- ▶ Replacing “BUT” with “BECAUSE”
  - Example: Your child comes to you and says, “I feel sad about missing out with my friends and school

What we want to say is...

*I can understand why you might feel sad BUT this  
won't last forever.*



What is more helpful to say...

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*I can understand why you might feel sad BECAUSE it is tough not seeing your friends in the way you want to.*

*Or*

*I can understand why you might feel sad BECAUSE  
school is so  
different than it used to be*

# Offering Practical Support

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- ▶ *“Is there something I could help you with right now to shift how you are feeling?”*
- ▶ *“What do you need right now to help you deal with this situation?”*
- ▶ *“How can I best support you right now?”*
- ▶ *“Would you like me to help you create a plan to move forward?”*

# Shortcuts to Validation

- ▶ I get why you would feel \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- ▶ I can see how that might make you feel \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- ▶ It makes sense that you're feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- ▶ I can only imagine how \_\_\_\_\_ this must be because ...
- ▶ No wonder you're \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- ▶ I can understand why you might feel \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- ▶ This is so \_\_\_\_\_ because ...

# Fixing vs. Validating

“Joy” and “Sadness” from “Inside Out”

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# Resources

- ▶ “Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting” by John Gottman
- ▶ <https://www.emotionfocusedfamilytherapy.org/emotion-coaching>
- ▶ <https://www.gottman.com/blog/an-introduction-to-emotion-coaching>