

Emotion Coaching

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Behaviours

The Positives

- Children displaying behaviour is good news!



Babies



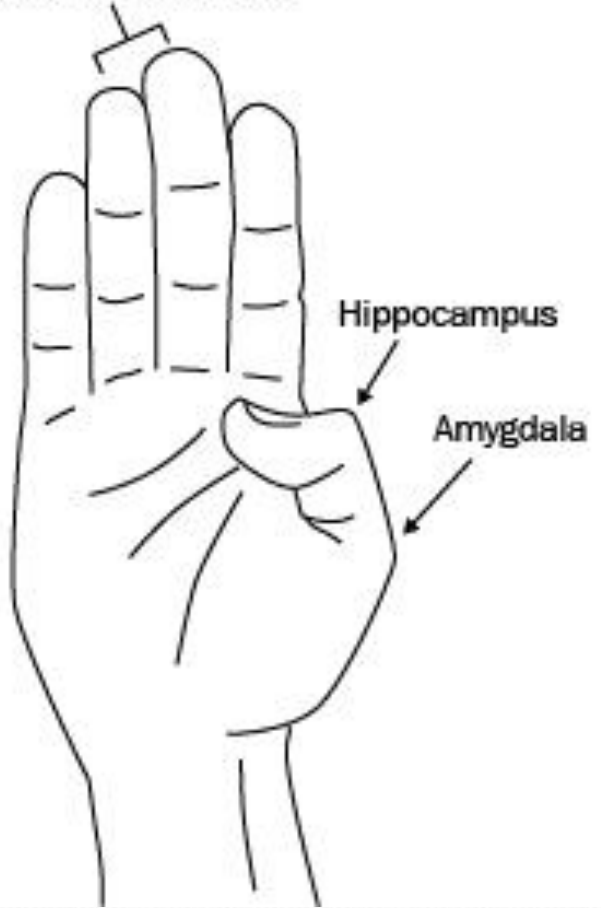
The Brain

- Behaviour is the evidence that a brain is working
 - All behaviour is communication (BABY)
 - Understanding how brains develop and function helps us to understand behaviour
 - We can help children whose behaviour makes it more difficult for them to manage everyday life to develop new ways of using their brains – human brains are constantly developing and changing
- More than 90% of what we now know about the human brain in terms of its development, structure and function has been discovered in the last twenty years.

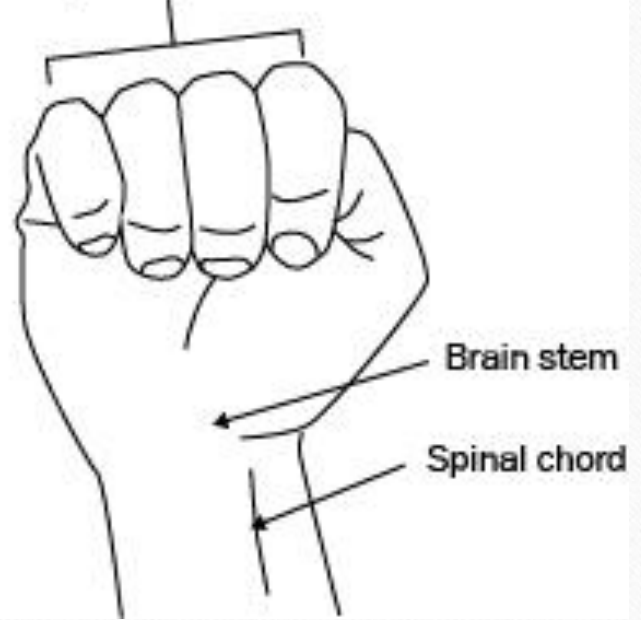
Brain and Nervous System

- In human beings energy constantly flows – our minds manage our energy flow and convert it into information
- The brain-and-nervous-system makes it possible for every cell in the body to be part of this flow of energy and information
- Distributed nervous system
- Lower brain: basic life-support
- Mid-brain: motor functions, impulses, strong emotions
- Higher brain: social, emotional and cognitive functions
 - Right hemisphere: social and emotional, intuitive, unconscious
 - Left hemisphere: cognitive and rational, language, conscious

Middle prefrontal cortex



Cerebral cortex



If we 'flip our lid'

... the downstairs brain

- *instantaneous response*

- Fight
 - Remove the threat
- Flight
 - Remove self!
- Freeze
 - Infantilise to attract adult help
 - Immobility, big eyes, smiles, perhaps incontinence

... and the upstairs brain

- *strategies and behaviours*

- Aggression
 - Safety through dominance
- Absence
 - Safety through concealment
- Appeasement
 - Safety through manipulation

... **SURVIVING** not thriving

What would we do?

Current behaviour policy

Attachment

- What do we know about attachment?
 - Secure and stable relationships are the foundation for healthy emotional development and subsequent secure and stable relationships.
 - Trauma related experiences (particularly in childhood), undermine attachments, thereby creating a cycle of further trauma, intra psychic distress and alienation from sources of support.

Attachment

- Attachment is the emotional bond that is formed between objects in order to establish a sense of security and safety.
- Attachment relationships provide:
 - A safe haven that promotes a feeling of security even in times of distress.
 - A secure base that fosters confidence in one's ability to actively explore the wider world.
 - A structured schema that promotes the ability to make sense of mental states such as desires, feelings, and beliefs in oneself and others.
- Although attachment begins in infancy, the need for “attachment relationships” continues throughout all life.

Attachment Aware School

- An attachment aware setting is one in which everyone can feel safe
 - The setting values and supports co-regulating and co-learning relationships
 - Individuals at all levels understand the need for, and benefit from, such relationships
- An attachment aware school is one in which children can learn because they feel safe
 - Secure attachment = feeling safe
 - Feeling safe = optimal brain function
 - Optimal brain function = optimal learning

School to Prison Line

Sent out of class

Detention

Isolation

Temporary exclusion

Permanent exclusion

Pupil Referral Unit

Young Offender Institution

Prison

Line closed indefinitely

Empathy

Support

Success

Nearly 25,000 children under 7 were excluded from schools in 2015/6

Exclusion rates have risen by 17% in the last school year alone

Excluded pupils are 7 times more likely to have special education needs

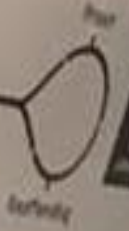
But children with an EHC plan are 3 times more likely to be excluded

There are 100,000 children in the care system

We deserve better

We demand better

Education not exclusion



Activity

- Emotions
- Spend a moment to consider the last time that you felt like this and what you did once you felt this way



How do we come back down?

- Thinking about your own experiences
- How did you manage to come back down?

How do we come back down

- Example – Argument with a friend
- Example- Child out of class
- What are they thinking?
- Anxiety
- We know how it feels as adults

Putting the lid back on

Escalation

(stress) axis

- adrenaline, cortisol, etc.
- rising blood pressure
- shallow breathing
- increased muscle tension

- The downstairs brain is in charge

SURVIVAL

De-escalation

- Vagus nerve

- oxytocin, dopamine, etc.
- lowering blood pressure
- deeper breathing
- reduced muscle tension

- The upstairs brain is back in action

SAFETY

Emotion Coaching

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mx41SPMLBMg>

Building and maintaining healthy brains

... involves developing connections between brain cells

- Baby brains form connections in response to what the adults around the baby are doing – attachment relationships build brains
- Rapid shaping and structuring of the brain continues through to the end of the third year of life, but the brain prefers existing neural pathways to developing new connections – repetition strengthens brains
- Although development slows down after early childhood, the brain is always producing new connections and does so most effectively when the brain is interacting with another human brain
- The brain is a social organ

What do we need from other brains?

Building baby brains

- early childhood development

- Mindful awareness
 - Holding the child in mind
 - Being aware of the mind of the child
- Soothing
 - Settling the nervous system
- Stimulation
 - Activating brain function

Maintaining healthy brains

- lifelong development

- Mindful awareness
 - Holding the person in mind
 - Being aware of the mind of the other person
- Co-regulation
 - Settling the nervous system
- Co-learning
 - Activating brain function

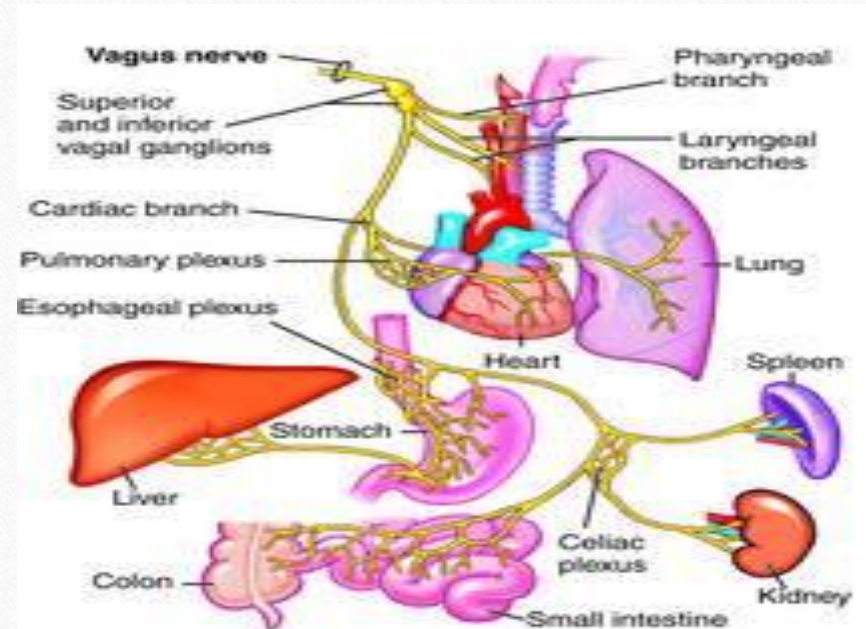
ACTIVITY

- In your group, think about the latest incident that you have dealt with.
- 1) What happened? (A-B)
- 2) How long did it take the child to regulate?
- 3) How did the episode end?
- (feedback)

What happens?

- Sent to the corner of the room
- Sent outside of the classroom
- Sent to a Senior leader
- Sent to Head Teacher

The Vagus Nerve: Runs from the brain throughout the body and acts on all organs

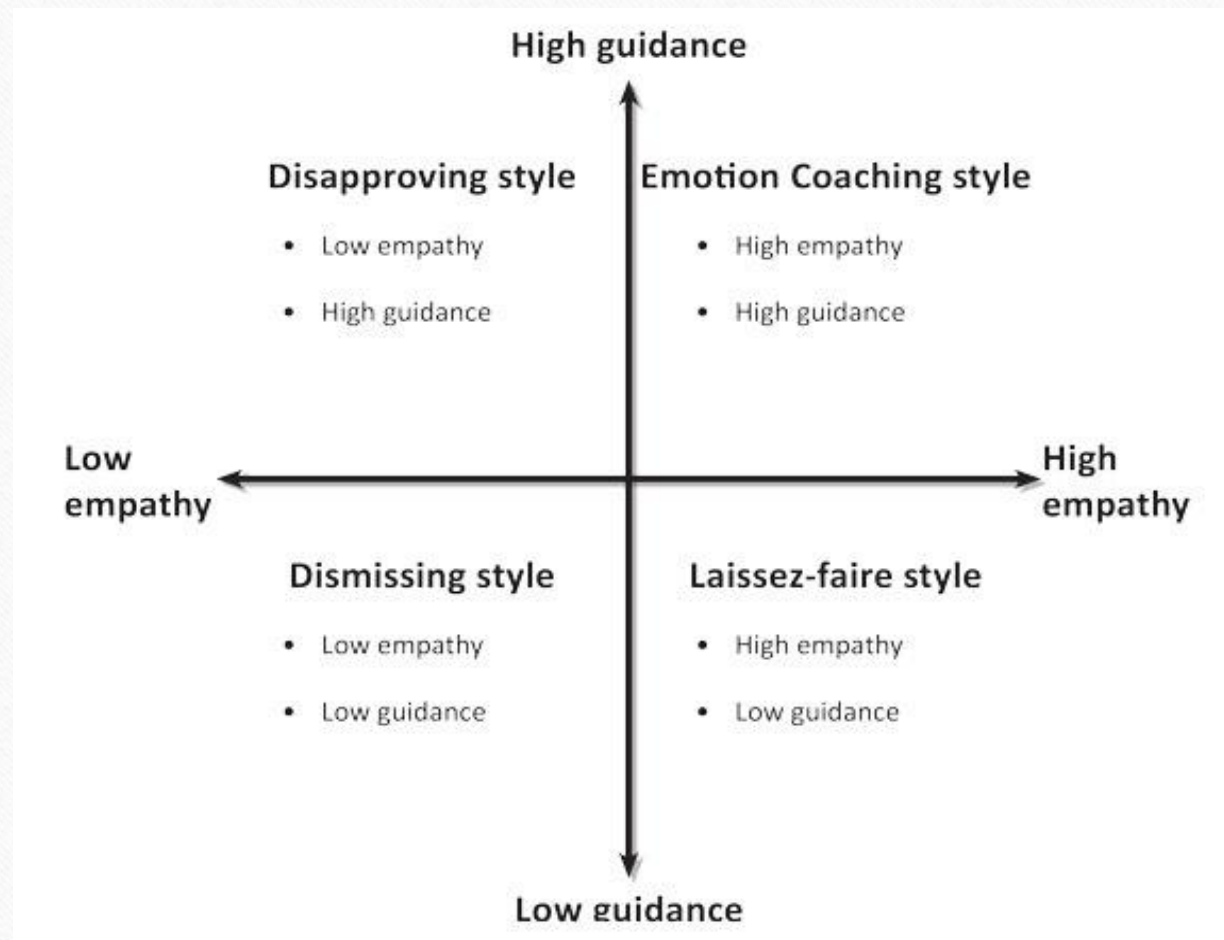


“The vagal system allows us to maintain continued social engagement by modulating and fine-tuning sympathetic arousal during emotional interpersonal exchanges” (Cozolino, 2006: 61)

The benefits of good vagal tone



Response styles: You? Your colleagues?



Disapproving style

- Disapproves of negative emotions – viewed as a sign of weakness or lack of control
- Lacks empathy – noticeably critical and intolerant
- Tries to get rid of negative emotions via discipline, reprimand, punishment
- Focuses on the behaviour rather than the emotions driving the behaviour
- May regard negative emotions as manipulation
- Often motivated by need to control and regain power, or to ‘toughen up’ the child

Dismissing style

- Wants to make the child feel better but is uncomfortable with negative emotions
- Views negative emotions as toxic – to be ‘got over’ quickly
- Thinks paying attention to such emotions makes them worse
- Tries to stop emotions by reducing or minimising – making light of their significance (“It’s no big deal”, “Don’t worry about it”, “That’s life”, “You’ll be fine”)
- Often motivated by need to rescue and make things better (“Have a biscuit”, “I’ll buy you a new one”)
- Focuses on getting rid of the emotion with logic or distraction rather than understanding the feelings

Disapproving and dismissing may seem to work, but the actual message is ...

- “What you are feeling is not right, your assessment of the situation is wrong, you must not feel this way”
 - The child does not learn to trust their own feelings, which affects their capacity to make any decisions
 - They are not given opportunities to experience emotions and deal with them effectively, so grow up unprepared for life’s challenges
 - They do not have opportunities to self-regulate or problem-solve
 - Can lead to suppression of natural emotions, less (or no) self-regulation, reliance on distraction to get rid of emotion
 - Generates more negative feelings – resentment, guilt, shame, anger

Laissez faire style

- Occurs when the adult is overwhelmed by the power of the emotions driving the child
 - The adult feels helpless or afraid or distressed
 - Despite the empathy of the adult, the child experiences no safe containment of their emotions
 - The child receives no guidance on how to manage the feelings
- Once the adult is in laissez faire style the behaviour will escalate
 - A laissez faire approach is evidently not effective in helping children and young people to manage their own behaviour

Emotion coaching style: high empathy / high guidance

Three steps to success:

■ Step 1

- Recognising, empathising, validating the feelings and labelling them
- ‘Connection before correction’ (Golding et al, 2013)

■ Step 2

- Setting limits on behaviour
- Rapport before reason

■ Step 3

- Problem-solving with the child or young person

How do we do emotion coaching?

- Having emotional awareness of own emotions (meta-emotion philosophy)

“Put on your oxygen mask first before putting it on the child”

- Recognising the power and purpose of emotions
- Empathising
- Active listening / rapport building
- Scaffolding / problem solving
- Role-modelling



Think individually about the setting in which you work. How could vulnerable children and young people recognise that this is a setting that promotes stabilisation? What do they say about their experience of being in your setting?

- Feeling safe?
- Feeling that they are in a setting where their emotions are recognised and named?
- Feeling that they are in a setting where their difficulties are recognised and understood?

-
- Think individually about the setting in which you work. How could vulnerable children and young people recognise that this is a setting that promotes integration? What do they say about their experience of being in your setting?

Every Child Needs a Champion

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFnMTHhKdkw>

So now...

- Looking back to the most recent incident that you discussed earlier within your group, what would you do now?

Questions
