

Circles of Empathy: Trauma Informed Reflective Supervision for School Staff Using an Emotion Coaching Approach

Reflective Supervision is a time for practitioners to come together in a small group to support and hold space for each other emotionally.

Circles of Empathy is a supervision model that adopts an 'Emotion Coaching' approach.

Originally created by the American Psychologist John Gottman, Emotion Coaching is an approach that is based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide optimal contexts for the promotion of positive outcomes and resilience.

Emotion Coaching promotes an interaction style that is high in empathy so as to convey to the individual that their emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, which in turn promotes a sense of feeling seen, heard and 'felt'.

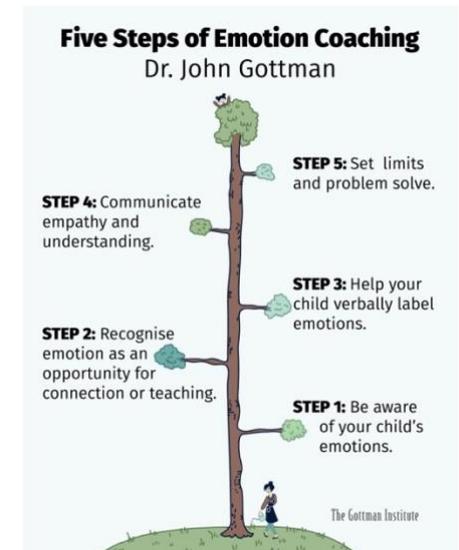
The format for this Reflective Supervision is as follows:

1. One person (the speaker) brings to supervision an experience or problematic situation they have encountered (that they feel safe to talk about in this space). The speaker is encouraged to choose one or more 'emotion cards' that represents the main emotions experienced, and to reflect on the following questions:
 - What was the situation?
 - What were the emotions I experienced?
 - What were the emotions experienced by others?
 - What did I do?
 - What aspects of Emotion Coaching were used in that moment?

At this stage, the other members of the group's role is at Steps 1 & 2 of the Emotion Coaching tree: to listen & attune (5-10 minutes).

2. After, the listening members of the group practice the Emotion Coaching style of offering validation of emotions through labelling and showing empathy (Steps 3 – 4) (5-10 minutes).

3. Finally, invite the speaker to consider what they might need to do now. What is their feeling a signal for them needing to do (in terms of self-regulation)? Is there any restoration needed? Is any problem-solving required? (Step 5) (5-10 minutes)



Each member of the supervision group is encouraged to keep a 'Feelings Diary' to maintain their own reflective practice.

Circles of Empathy aim to be trauma informed and we will honour each other's vulnerability, as well as recognise our strengths.



Please contact Juliette Ttofa for further information.

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