



Tuning in to Teens

Professor Sophie Havighurst

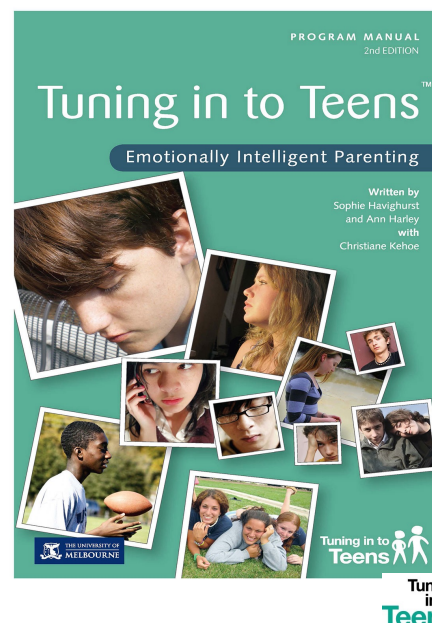
Thursday 25th July, 2024



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Overview of the Session

- Emotional changes in adolescence
- Emotional intelligence and how it develops
- Emotion Coaching – what it is and why it works
- Demonstration of emotion coaching
- How to manage emotions when parenting
- Take home points



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Adolescent Emotional Development

Video on adolescent emotional development



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Emotional Changes in Adolescence

Many challenges that affect emotions

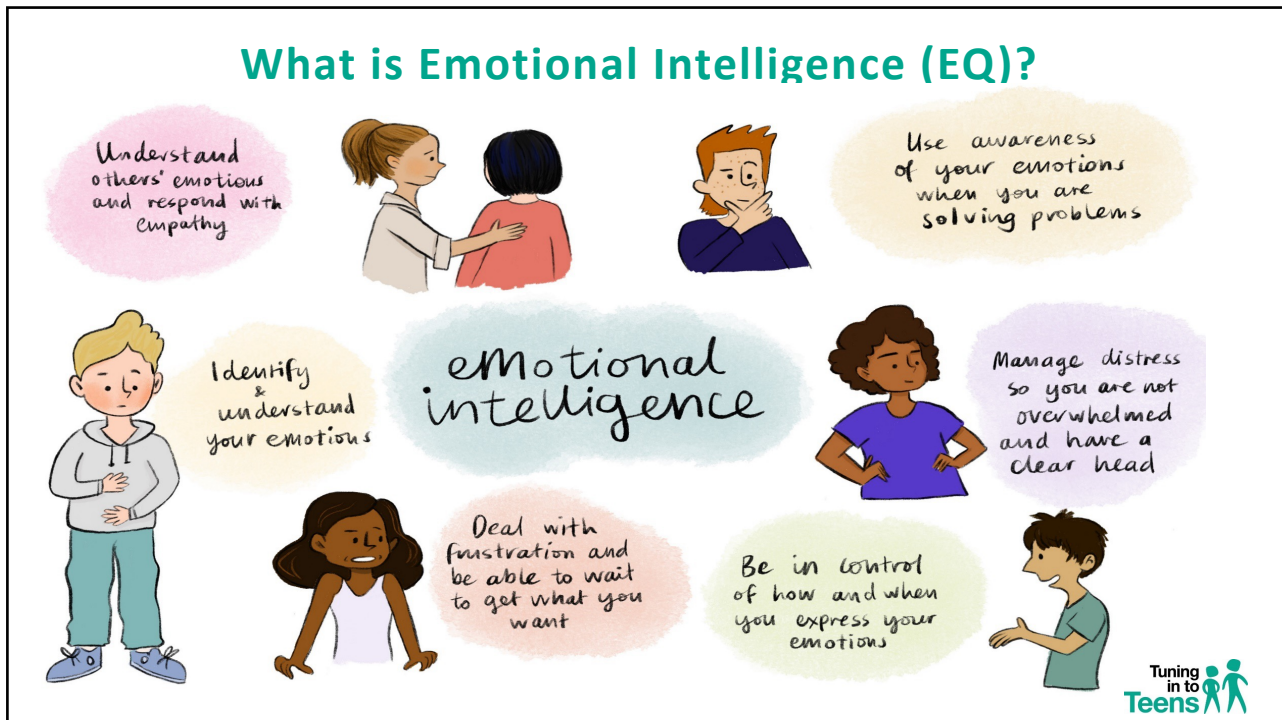
- Body changes, puberty, growth
- Identity - 'Who am I?', cultural, gender and sexual identity
- Desire to fit in (early teens) or be different (later teens)
- Social relationships – friends, intimate partners
- Greater comparison of self to others
- Often increased embarrassment, shame, anger, withdrawal
- Pressure! What are you going to do with your life???

Emotional Changes

- Rapid floods of emotions that change constantly
- Increased irritability and anger - especially with family
- Difficulty regulating emotions: high intensity/low control
- Limited strategies to manage intense emotions
- Emotional flooding or withdrawal
- Greater awareness of one's own emotional reactions

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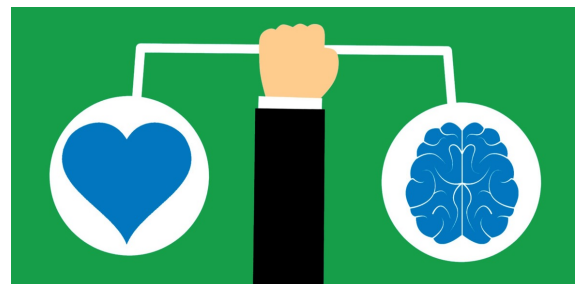
What is Emotional Intelligence (EQ)?



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How does Emotional Intelligence Develop?

- Temperament
- Environment and experience
- How parents/carers model emotions, react to emotions, and discuss emotions
- Family emotional climate
- Parent meta-emotion philosophy -
- The way we think and feel about emotions



Gottman, Katz and Hooven, 1996

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Parent Emotion Socialisation Styles

Four patterns of responding to children's emotions identified in research:

- **Emotion Dismissing:** ignores uncomfortable emotions. Often motivated by need to rescue and make things better, fix the problem, or correct.
- **Emotion Disapproving:** disapproves or is critical of emotions being expressed (particularly uncomfortable emotions). Often motivated by a need to control and regain power and/or to "toughen up" the child.
- **Laissez-Faire:** accepts all emotions but fails to educate the child about emotions and does not place guidance around behaviour.
- **Emotion Coaching:** values all emotions and helps understand feelings while also guiding behaviour.

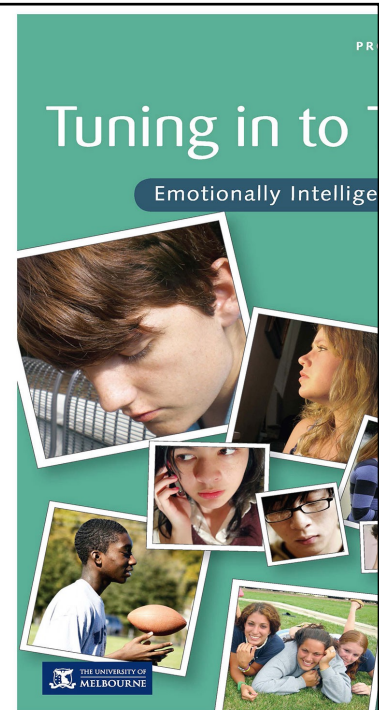


Tuning
in to
Teens

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What is Tuning in to Teens?

- Tuning in to Kids was developed by Sophie Havighurst and Ann Harley
- Adapted as Tuning in to Teens (Havighurst, Harley and Kehoe)
- A program for parents/carers to support teen's emotional intelligence
- Teaches communication style of **Emotion Coaching**.
- Emotion Coaching is a relationship skill for parenting or in any relationship (friendships, sibling relationships, intimate relationships)



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Tuning in to Teens Philosophy

- Emotions are for communicating & connecting
- All emotions are okay – they have a function
- When emotions are high, thinking is often low
- Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the brain
- Emotion awareness, understanding and regulation – not over-control.
- Parents move from manager to consultant as children grow (Mike Riera)
- Difficult behaviour often reduces when parents understand and respond to teen's emotions – what's under the surface of the iceberg?
- Parents can support their teen's emotional development.
- Emotion coaching is for when emotions occur.



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What is Emotion Coaching?

1. Become aware of their emotion, especially if it is of a lower intensity (such as disappointment or frustration)
2. View their emotion as an opportunity for connection and teaching
3. Listen with empathy, and communicate your understanding and acceptance of the emotion: avoid judgement
4. Help them use words to describe what they feel
5. If necessary, help them to solve problems (or engage in limit setting, reassurance, distraction, explanations, etc...)



**Try to Emotion Coach
30-40% of the time**

Adapted from Gottman, J. M. & DeClair, J. (1997). *The Heart of Parenting: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.



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The Hand Model of the Brain (Based on Dan Siegel's model, 2014)

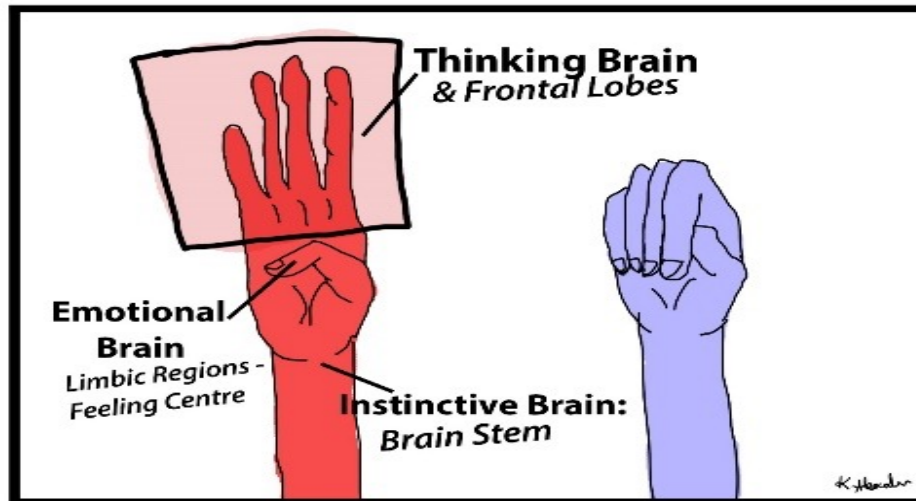


Illustration by Kate Alexander



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Demonstration of Emotion Coaching

Live demonstration of emotion coaching

What worked? What didn't?

Questions?

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Emotion Coaching: Messages the teen receives

- Emotions are natural, normal and will pass.
- Everyone feels emotions - recognise them in ourselves and others.
- We can learn to regulate emotions and express them in healthy ways.
- When I have these emotions, I am not alone. I am loved, accepted, supported, cared about, understood, and respected.
- I am capable of solving my own problems.



Aim: Teens develop emotion regulation strategies, including accepting their emotions and healthy self-talk.



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What if my teen's emotions are strong or they don't want to talk?

Avoid saying ...

Calm down! You'll be right! Stop it!

Cheer up! Don't worry

Get over it! You should...

Just breathe! How many times have I told you....

Why are you reacting like that?

Instead try ...

- Do I need to slow down and build in a pause?
- Notice their bids for connection
- Notice emotions behind words, body language, actions and situations
- Reduce questions – Use less talk!
- Slow down the 5-steps of emotion coaching (avoid step 5 until they are calm)
- Allow time – sit with them

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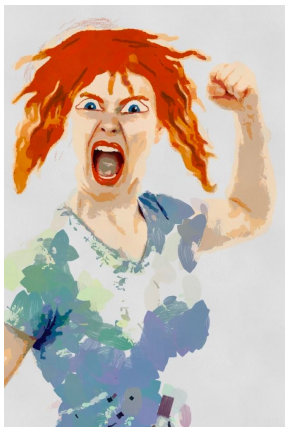
Bids for Connection



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Emotion Regulation for Parents



- Build in a pause:
 - Count to 10
 - Breathe slowly for 10 breaths
 - Drink cold water/suck on ice
 - Move out of the situation
 - Focus on the senses (i.e., hold a necklace, keys etc)
- Activities to calm or let off steam
- Activities to fill up your emotional tank

Havighurst & Kehoe (2023). Enhancing parental emotion regulation skills. In Roskam, I., Gross, J. & Mikolajczak, M. (Ed.s), *Emotion Regulation and Parenting*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.



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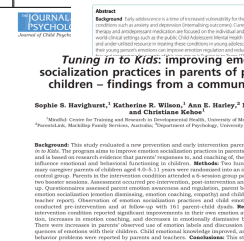
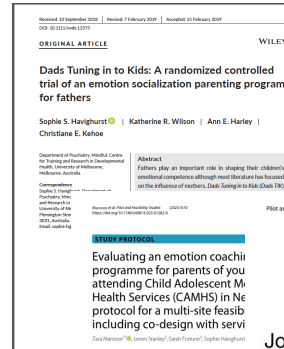
Tuning in to Teens: Outcomes

University of Melbourne evaluations

- Improved emotional intelligence
- Lower anxiety, depression, behaviour problems and family conflict
- Greatest benefit for children with higher levels of:
 - Negative reactivity
 - Behaviour problems (particularly at a young age)
 - Anxiety/depression

Hearspace and other independent service evaluations

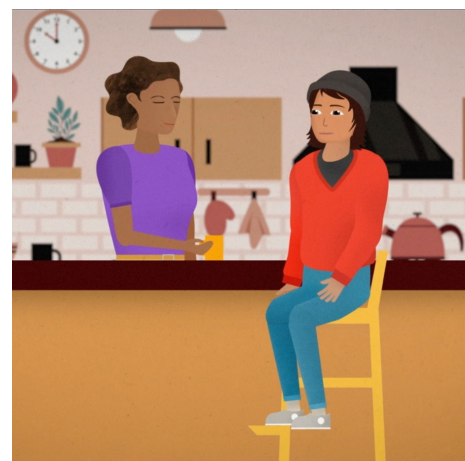
<https://headspace.org.au/headspace-central/lilydale/>



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Emotion Coaching – 5 steps

1. Become aware of their emotion, especially if it is of a lower intensity (such as disappointment or frustration)
2. View their emotion as an opportunity for connection and teaching
3. Listen with empathy and communicate your understanding and acceptance of the emotion: avoid judgement
4. Help them use words to describe what they feel
5. If necessary, help them solve problems (or set limits, provide reassurance, distraction, information, etc.)



Emotion Coach 30-40% of the time

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Final points

- Build in a pause - See if you can manage your emotions
- Change from manager to consultant
- Notice emotions – What's under the iceberg?
- Opportunities and bids for connection
- Turn towards rather than turning away or against
- Emotion coach when no eye contact, in the car, at night
- With high emotion, avoid lots of questions or advice
- To empathise, think of a comparable adult situation and use general statements **“How disappointing; That’s annoying; So sad...”**
- Use ‘start ups’ that are gentle - **“I wonder if that made you angry?” “It sounds like you felt really sad.”**
- Talk about limits and solutions when everyone is calm.
- If setting limits, use empathy – **“I know how much you want to go to the party. It’s I missing out.”**



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THANK YOU

Acknowledgements

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Mindful and the Tuning in to Kids Team

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