

Somerset Emotion Coaching Project

Executive Summary March 2017



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Introduction: The Somerset Emotion Coaching project

This project forms part of the Somerset Children and Young People Health and well-being in Learning Programme. The Somerset County Council Public Health team commissioned Bath Spa University and EHCAP (a social enterprise company) to deliver a programme of Emotion Coaching training to the children and young people's workforce across the five districts of Somerset. The training is based on Bath Spa's Attachment Aware Schools programme, the Tuning into Kids programme from Melbourne University, Australia, and the research on Emotion Coaching by John Gottman and colleagues, along with the research on mindfulness and the work of Dan Siegel in the USA.

To date, the project has spanned over two years and consists of three phases of training. During this time, the two organisations have worked together to train over 160 champions to take on leadership roles within their own organisations and across services working with professionals and young people. This has included working with Somerset Education Psychology Service and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) to embed Emotion Coaching into their practice. The 2015-16 phase of the project was led by Dr Sarah Temple, a Somerset GP and director of EHCAP and Dr Janet Rose, a Reader in Education from Bath Spa University, now the Principal of Norland College. The 2016-17 phase of the project has been led by Dr Sarah Temple, Richard Parker, Head of Consultancy at Bath Spa University, and Rebecca Digby and Eleanor West, Research Associates at Bath Spa University. The project began its final phase in May 2017 and will complete at the end of December 2017. This will focus on facilitator training and is led by Dr Sarah Temple.

The project has had far reaching impact on both children and young people, parents and those adults who work alongside them. Over the two years it has run, there have been continued reports that engagement in an Emotion Coaching approach has led to: increased empathic behaviours and understanding of a repertoire of emotions; increased self-regulation of behaviour; increased enjoyment and engagement in education settings; improved relationships and communication; and an increased culture of openness. Additionally, those working in the children and young people's workforce have identified joined-up communication across services and increased well-being in the workplace.

In summary, the project has:

- promoted the use of Emotion Coaching techniques by community groups in their everyday practice with children and young people;
- provided a framework for helping practitioners to manage their own emotional self-regulation;
- integrated mindfulness into practice;
- supported children and young people's capacity for pro-social behaviour and emotional self-regulation;
- built on and strengthened current positive practices and partnerships that contribute to and promote community networks and collaborative work through a shared framework;
- promoted the utilisation of the Somerset Mental Health Toolkit; and
- developed a county-wide sustainable network that reflects how the different services are working together to create a joined up approach in supporting children and young people's emotional health.

The focus of this report is on the outcomes and findings of the 2016-17 phase of the project. However, some correlations have been made to the 2015-16 phase findings within the case study themes. For further details on the 2015-16 phase, please see Rose et al. (2016b).

Aims of the project: 2016-17 phase

The key aims of the 2016-17 phase of the project build on the aims to increase understanding of emotional health and well-being, enhance skills in supporting children and young people's emotional health and well-being, facilitate the referral process for children and young people and improve access to services as specified in the following outcomes:

- Strengthen the delivery and network of Emotion Coaching champions across Somerset, so they increase their impact on promoting children and young people's social development and mental well-being
- Increase the number of key children and young people staff who have undertaken the Emotion Coaching training programme and increase their impact to promote children's social development and mental well-being

Brief Summary of Outcomes and Findings: 2016-17 phase

OUTCOME ONE:

To strengthen the delivery and network of Emotion Coaching champions across Somerset, so they increase their impact on promoting children and young people's social development and mental well-being

Lead champions and specific organisations in each of the five district areas have been identified and led in cascading activities to ensure the sustainability of an Emotion Coaching network. The network is supported with online resources established with champions. Resources continue to be uploaded and materials developed by champions for others to use in the dissemination of Emotion Coaching. Throughout the 2016-17 phase of the project, champions were made aware of the Mental Health Toolkit (MHT) and have had opportunities to engage with its resources during training sessions. A parent support page, set up by a parent who attended the Emotion Coaching training, has received more than 300 parent followers. This has continued the cascading of information.

The final 2017 phase of the project will focus on training 15 Emotion Coaching facilitators to continue to embed Emotion Coaching within schools, settings and organisations. This final phase aims to ensure that the project maintains momentum and has a sustainable impact on children and young people's mental health and well-being.

Examples of cascading activities across various settings include:

Setting	Profession	Example of cascading
School	PFSA	Cascaded to staff at an INSET day, Emotion Coaching used with transition group students who have an Emotion Coaching mentor. Planned INSET session in 2017 and workshop to parents.
	Deputy Head	INSET and student focus every week. Pastoral team interventions are based on Emotion Coaching.
	Head Teacher	Work in collaboration. PFSAs to deliver workshops and have a mop up session afterwards for staff. Workshop to parents and can be used to deliver to

		other schools.
	Pre School Teacher	Developing mindful play in groups.
	SENCo	Integrating Emotion Coaching with Emotional Logic enabling frameworks for working with bereaved children. Sharing learning across Somerset.
External	GP	Talks were given to other GPs and techniques used at work with teenagers.
Domestic Abuse Service	Family Worker	Developed a parenting programme based upon Dan Siegel (Hand Model), John Gottman (Emotion Coaching steps), Kate Cairns Five to Thrive and mindfulness. Half day training session in April 2017.
Police	Victim and Witness Care Officer	Work with Emotion Coaching vulnerable victims and witnesses of crime, in particular victims of domestic abuse.
Early Help	Getset	Peer mentoring for staff dissemination. Tuning into Kids training attended and now running parenting groups and using resources with one to one work.

A Somerset Emotion Coaching Project Dissemination Conference was attended by over 65 delegates including teachers, parents, education psychologists, GPs, public health commissioners, youth workers, social workers, ELSAs, Early Years and Children’s Centre staff, Getset, counsellors, parent and family support workers and other interested voluntary organisations.

Overall evaluations of the Conference were very positive, with 74% of respondents evaluating the conference as excellent and 23% as good – 97% in all.

Delegates commented:

‘It was great to hear how people are cascading the Emotion Coaching project in their schools/settings’

‘Making time to listen, connect and teach early on pays dividends later in terms of money saved and improved outcomes for everyone’

OUTCOME 2

Increase the number of key children and young people staff who have undertaken the Emotion Coaching training programme and increase their impact to promote children’s social development and mental well-being.

In total, eight case studies were collated to demonstrate how outcome two was met. These illustrate the impact of the 2016-17 phase project on the lives of children and young people, parents and those adults working alongside them. A sample of the case study themes are presented below.

CASE STUDY THEME 1: Increased empathic awareness and improved ability to label and communicate

emotions

Reports of an increased ability in children and young people to name and label emotions, communicate emotions to others and engage in empathic behaviours appeared throughout the case studies. Case Study 1 provides an example of increased empathic awareness in year 5 primary school children and their improved ability to label own emotions and communicate them to others.

Background: Over one term the head teacher and SENCo of a primary school trained all staff in Emotion Coaching. Emotion Coaching was also integrated into the behaviour policy and is part of teaching assistant's performance management. Two terms later, 115 participants in year 3, year 4 and year 5 took part in assessments to explore the impact of Emotion Coaching training on children.

In line with research (Eisenberg et al., 1998; Gottman et al., 1997; Havighurst et al., 2013; Kehoe et al., 2014), data from the case study suggests that participants immersed within an Emotion Coaching environment increased their dispositional empathy (both cognitive and affective) and sympathy. This was indicated by the increase in participant's determination of how another person may have been thinking and feeling in a given situation. An increase in children's ability to describe and label their own emotions and their willingness to communicate emotion to others was also evident in the data.

Figure 1: Year 5 pre and post Emotion Coaching training showing an overall increase in levels of dispositional empathy

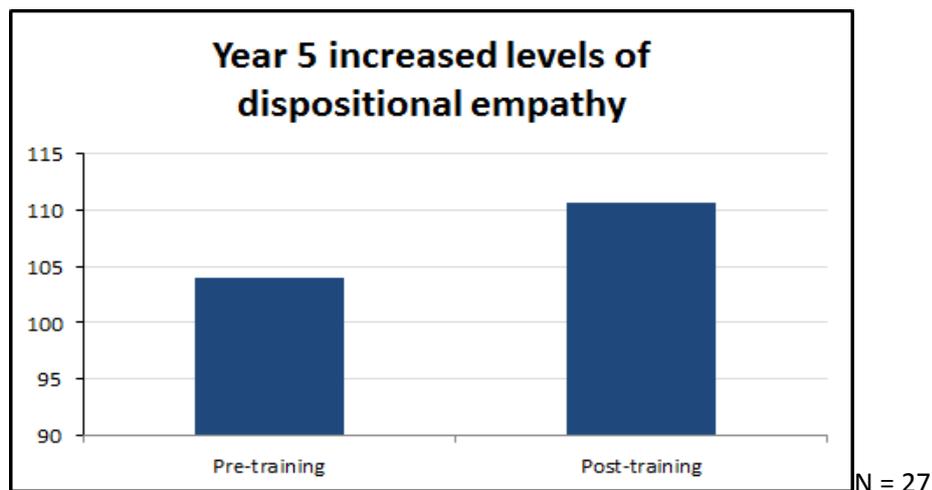
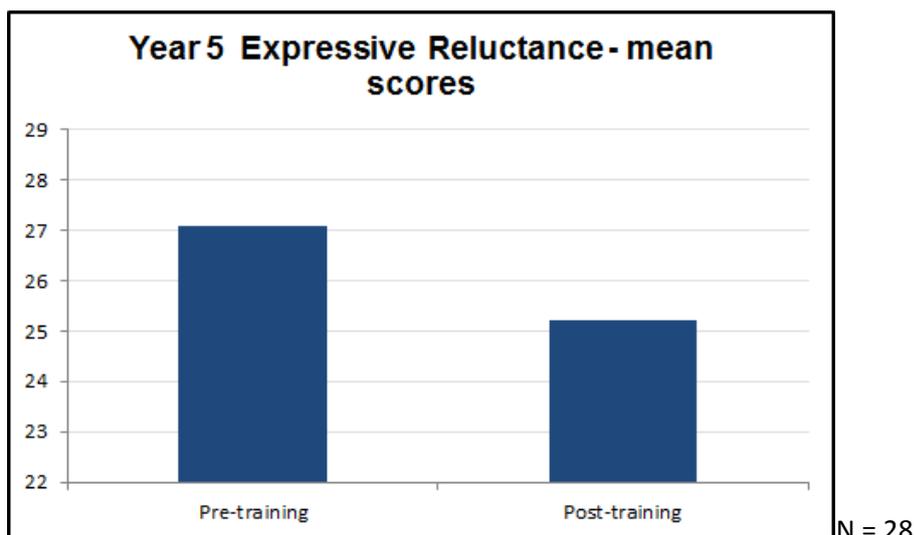


Figure 2: Year 5 pre and post emotion coaching training showing an overall decrease in reluctance to express a range of emotions



An increased ability to describe and label emotions and communicate with others was also evident in Early Years education contexts, as shown in the following extract from a vignette:

Vignette 1: An Emotion Coaching approach used to support a young children with describing and labelling emotions, and communicating feelings to others.

Professional Role: Early Years Specialist

Child/Young person: mixed pre-school class, age: 3 years

Vignette

A parent in the pre-school was concerned that Child A was upset at home before coming to preschool. Child A was unsettled at the beginning and last 15 minutes of each session. He found it difficult to concentrate on an activity and was constantly walking around the setting. His behaviour had an effect on the younger children, with one or two joining in and crying.

Outcome

Over a period of seven weeks, Child A was able to describe how he was feeling. For instance, 'happy', 'sad' or 'angry'. The more he talked about his feelings, the more he calmed down. He was then able to select and carry out activities. His concentration has improved, and he is now going from doing activities for a couple of minutes to ten to fifteen minutes. He was able to join the whole group at the end of the session to share experiences.

The parents find it easier to leave Child A knowing he is able to settle to activities and he is able to relate his feelings to his key person.

These findings correlate strongly with those from the 2015-16 phase of the project which showed how using Emotion Coaching improved staff empathy and patience in taking the perspective of the child, as well as providing staff with a new and structured tool to manage.

CASE STUDY THEME 2: Improved self-regulation and well-being in children and young people

The case studies consistently show evidence suggesting adults and children or young people have worked together to co-create strategies to support children and young people’s self-regulation in times of high emotional states. Self-regulation refers to the self-directed processes that allow people to appropriately respond to their environment (Bronson, 2000). In line with literature (see for example, Gottman et al., 1996), case studies suggest that this has been enabled through mutual emotional respect. Adults in family contexts and within school settings have reported that Emotion Coaching has supported children and young people with effectively regulating their emotions, leading to pro-social behaviour. Additionally, there has been an identified decrease in anxiety or anger levels at home and in school.

The case studies also suggest that engagement in an Emotion Coaching approach has enabled adults to empathically support and consistently guide children and young people when intensive emotions (and behaviours) are presented. Both practitioners and parents have reported that empathic responses on part of the adult have directly correlated with greater emotional regulation in children and young people. Indeed, within the case studies, adult attunement and self-regulation (see case study theme 5) was frequently identified as an important prerequisite for redirecting the young person towards a more positive outcome.

The following extract from case studies show how Emotion Coaching can be used to de-escalate situations and enable children and young people to self-regulate effectively.

Case Study 2: A case study demonstrating increased self-regulation in a young person

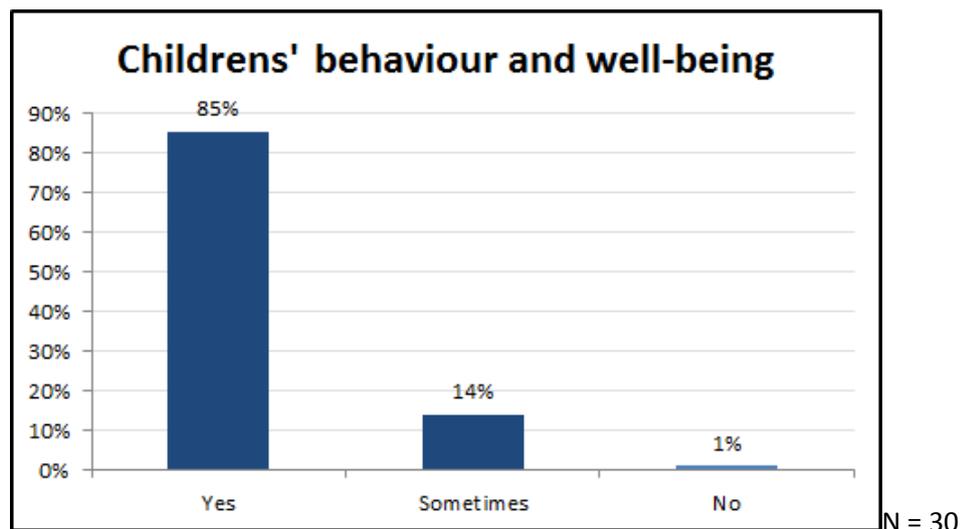
<p>Professional Role: Parent and Family Support Advisor (PFSA) Child/Young Person: Male, Age: 15 years</p>
<p>Background</p> <p>Child B was selected as their carer came along to the Tuning into teens parenting group. Both parent and school were finding Child B’s behaviour challenging. Child B’s behaviour escalated to a level where there was a real concern, to the degree where a decision was made for the Child B to be placed in a separate provision within the school. This was a six-week programme where Child B would have access to 1-1 and small group sessions focusing on emotional intelligence and soothing strong emotions.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>As part of the Emotion Coaching process the carer improved their responses to others, which in turn improved the relationship between Child B and Child B’s birth parent. It is worth noting that this (carer and birth parent) relationship took a large amount of coaching, support with setting clear boundaries and time to develop a respectful and consistent relationship. This also had a positive impact on Child B as he experienced a home environment that was calmer, more regulated and he was provided with more positive role models. As a result of engaging in the alternative provision which included use of the Emotion Coaching approach, Child B had a greater insight into his own emotions and how to regulate them. Behaviour points and fixed term exclusions reduced within school.</p>

Case Study 2a: A case study demonstrating increased self-regulation in a young person

Professional Role: Deputy Head Teacher Child/Young Person: Female, Age: 6 years
Background
<p>Child C struggles to deal with her emotions. She has very low self-esteem and finds being in a mainstream classroom very difficult. At the beginning of the term she had a one to one who supported her access her learning three mornings a week and she attended Nurture group three afternoons a week. She has Traveller status and poor attendance.</p>
Outcome
<p>There is still a long way to go but Child C has made lots of progress. She is more able to self-regulate and go from boiling point to calm much quicker. Alongside the Emotion Coaching hand model we are also talking to her about being 'warm' and what she can do to calm down. She now talks more openly about her emotions and can explain to others the hand model. Although the triggers are still there she seems to handle them better. She is also accessing 'Mindfulness' two-three times a day through Headspace.</p> <p>Staff use a systematic approach towards dealing with Child C when she 'flips her lid'. Child C is visiting the 'Calm Room' less and there has been a significant reduction in her removal from activities. Her learning is still affected by her outbursts and she still struggles with challenge.</p>

In addition to the evidence which suggests children and young people showed a greater ability to self-regulate emotions following Emotion Coaching, an increase in children and young people's well-being was identified by participants in the training programme.

Figure 3: The total impact of using an Emotion Coaching approach on children's behaviour and well-being as identified by participants



There is clear resonance between the 2015-16 and the 2016-17 phase findings in relation to children's behaviour and wellbeing with statistical results showing a clear improvement and narrative responses from

champions testifying to the way in which Emotion Coaching enabled children and young people to calm down more quickly de-escalating incidents and generating more positive self-regulating behaviours.

CASE STUDY THEME 4: Increased enjoyment and engagement in education settings

Research evidence shows that education and health are closely linked (Bradley and Green, 2013; Suhrcke et al., 2011). There has been a recent shift in Government educational policy (DfE, 2014; DfE, 2016) towards promoting positive mental health in pupils and in creating opportunities for practitioners to look ‘beyond’ children and young people’s behaviour through more person focused practice in order to support their engagement in education.

An integrated approach to understanding the relationship between children and young people’s emotional health and well-being, and their success in life has underpinned the Somerset Emotion Coaching project. The following case study suggests engagement in an Emotion Coaching approach has led to an increase in children and young people’s enjoyment and engagement in schools and settings.

Case study 4: A case study demonstrating a young person’s increased achievement and enjoyment for learning as a result of engagement in Emotion Coaching.

<p>Professional Role: Social Inclusion Coordinator Child/Young Person: Male, Age 15 years</p>
<p>Background</p> <p>Child E had previously been excluded from a local secondary school and for some time staff had been aware that he had struggled to remain house bound during school hours as he wanted contact with his peers. Prior to this Child E had been living elsewhere in Europe and had talked at length about missing his family and friends there. As a result, Child E’s experiences of isolation were heightened. Staff were working in the family home and all staff had noticed an emotional decline prior in Child E.</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Using an Emotion Coaching approach appears to have led to an increase in optimism and enjoyment when Child E works with us. My relationship with Child E’s family has also improved as they now realise that I am not simply interested in educational matters but in Child E himself as a person. Whilst still fragile, he has become quietly more optimistic and now let’s staff know that he looks forward to seeing them each week. The family have joined in several joint sessions with Child E since we began with the intervention. Prior to intervention all staff had noticed an increase in frustration, anxiety and several traits of learnt helplessness were beginning to emerge from this young person: ‘Child E was very agitated when I arrived this morning, he was very anxious and confused.....’ ‘A said he was worried about it yesterday too.’ This eased after the emotional recognition had happened and staff commented: ‘Just to let you all know that Child E had a very successful morning at forest school to quote him ‘I</p>

absolutely love it here!”

Prior to using Emotion Coaching, all staff feedback indicated a deteriorating level of self-regulation and an increase in pessimism around the future. After the intervention staff noticed an increase in happiness and an acceptance of the provision and where it was leading him to. More work was completed and there was more problem free talk and openness:

‘A really good session with Child E yesterday afternoon! I didn’t realise I was doing drama until we started the emotions board game, really great, I think my acting shocked Child E, I had to act out losing a board game and being angry, when I flipped the board over and messed the Uno cards up. Child E said I think we ought to put this game away, it was hilarious! Finished off with his favourite game of escape on the i-pad. No doubt he will tell you all about it when you see him. I’m looking forward to today’s teaching session with him this morning.’

This evidence which suggests improved enjoyment in academic studies as a result of engaging in the Emotion Coaching approach is supported by findings from various other studies which have shown how the quality of teacher–child relationships can influence both social and cognitive development (see for example, Davis, 2003). In particular, this case study demonstrates how Emotion Coaching has helped champions to see the whole person rather than just the problem. It also shows how engagement with an Emotion Coaching approach has created opportunities to build resilience with a young person. Further evidence across Emotion Coaching case studies shows a link between a positive well-being and improved outcomes, as illustrated in the following quotes which cite increased educational aspirations and an enjoyment of school:

‘T is attending school more frequently, is happy in school and motivated to get the results she needs for college.’

CASE STUDY THEME 5: Meta-Emotion and increased well-being in adults

Meta-emotion philosophy reflects the integration of values, beliefs and awareness of personal emotions and the emotions of others, and being able to take these into account when interacting (Gottman et al., 1997). Links between adults’ meta-emotion philosophy and children or young people’s ability to regulate emotion emerged as a significant theme across the case studies.

Champions also reported that noticing and examining their own beliefs and attitudes, and their reactions to children’s emotional expressions led to improved stress regulation for themselves and others. An increased awareness of emotions and change in meta-emotion philosophy was also identified by parents in their feedback on the outcomes of using the Emotion Coaching approach. The following quotes show professional and parental reflections on this developed awareness:

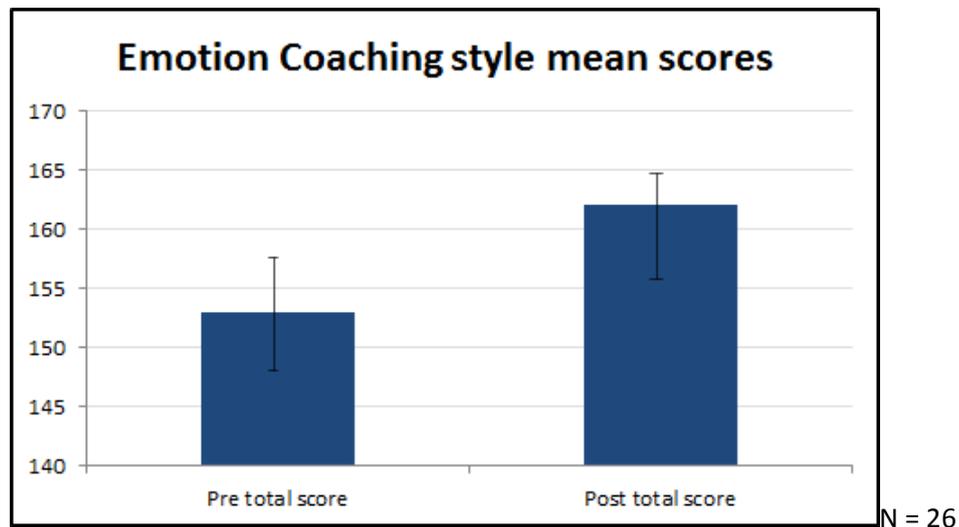
‘I am using practical mindfulness techniques with children, young people, families and classes at school. This constant reminder has raised my own awareness to the benefits.’

“Mum is better able to support; she has a greater awareness of her own emotions and is more able to allow (child S) to problem solve.”

Increased awareness of emotional mental health was measured via the use of a psychometric questionnaire

which ascertained the champions’ meta-emotion philosophy. Statistical analysis of the psychometric questionnaire suggests that participants became less ‘dismissing’ in their beliefs and attitudes about emotions and emotional expressions in children and young people and became more ‘Emotion Coaching’ in their attitudes and beliefs.

Figure 4: Overall pre and post Emotion Coaching training mean scores showing an increase in Emotion Coaching style



This data suggests that participants changed their meta-emotion philosophy indicated by a reduction in levels of emotion dismissing beliefs and attitudes and an increase of Emotion Coaching beliefs and attitudes. This is consistent with other evidence of Emotion Coaching used for parenting programmes (Gottman et al., 1997; Havighurst et al. 2010; Wilson et al., 2013).

Case study 5 provides an example of how engagement in an Emotion Coaching approach can support a parent in gaining awareness of her own and other’s emotions, and impact positively on mental-health. It also suggests a shift in both the parent’s and young person’s meta-emotion philosophy.

Case study 5: A case study showing that an increase in awareness of emotions has led to changes in meta-emotion philosophy and supported well-being

<p>Professional Role: Parent and Family Support Advisor Child/Young Person: Female, Age 10 years</p>
<p>Background</p> <p>I was asked to work with Child F 18 months ago when the school was providing Emotion Coaching support through a TA but Child F continued to struggle with her emotions. This included being frequently teary, emotional outbursts, difficulties resolving friendship issues, feeling “different” and often unable to focus on her learning. Also at home Child F had become increasingly aggressive towards her three younger half-siblings and frequently oppositional towards her mother and stepfather. I worked intensively with the parent and child introducing</p>

them to Emotion Coaching learning and the parent recently attended a Tuning Into Kids parent course.

The background to this case includes a long history of domestic and emotional abuse by the birth father of Child F.

Outcome

The parent reported that, as a result of engaging with Emotion Coaching:

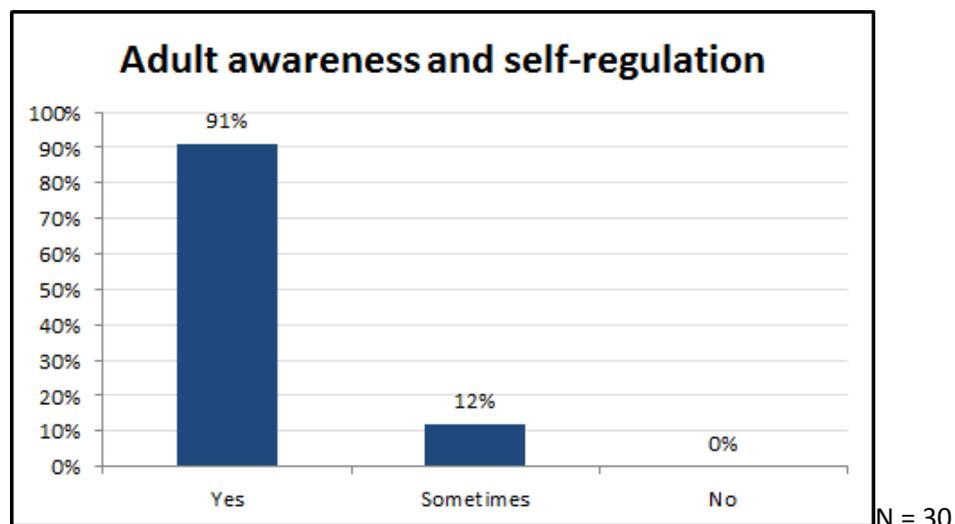
“Emotion Coaching helped a lot with Child F and for me. I’m much more aware and able to approach parenting in a calmer way, I notice when I get angry and uptight. I feel more in control of myself now. Child F used to do the same as me, get angry and fly off the handle and now I deal with it better and she does too. We still get stressed but can connect better at these times and find a way sort things out.”

“School is totally different now I don’t get called in, Child F has very little struggles emotionally. She used to have daily emotional outbursts and now manages much better and copes really well with all aspects of school. She’s in year 6 and SATS is a worry for her and we are able to talk about in a helpful way. Child F’s attitude has changed now and she feels part of her family. She is no longer “different”. She has changed her surname by her choice and she is much more settled.”

Child F and her mother are both happier, more resilient and able to cope with life’s ups and downs more effectively. I did work intensively with mother over several sessions and she attended a Tuning into Kids course. Child F’s mother is no longer scared of her own and Child F’s big emotions. She is calmer, centred and confident to parent. Both Child F and mother’s stress levels have massively reduced and they are actively using Emotion Coaching tools effectively.

As the case study illustrates, engagement in an Emotion Coaching approach may support increased self-regulation in adults. Awareness of increased self-regulation is also suggested in participant exit questionnaires completed at the end of phase two of the Emotion Coaching training programme:

Figure 5: Total post Emotion Coaching training scores showing adult awareness and self-regulation



Qualitative data from champions suggests further evidence of increased ability to self-regulate following Emotion Coaching training. For instance, champions recognised that engaging in self-regulating behaviours made difficult situations involving children and young people less stressful and exhausting, which led to a positive impact on both adult and children or young people’s well-being:

‘With children who have been at risk of exclusion, I have gained a better understanding in supporting their emotions without the daily telephone calls to parents.’

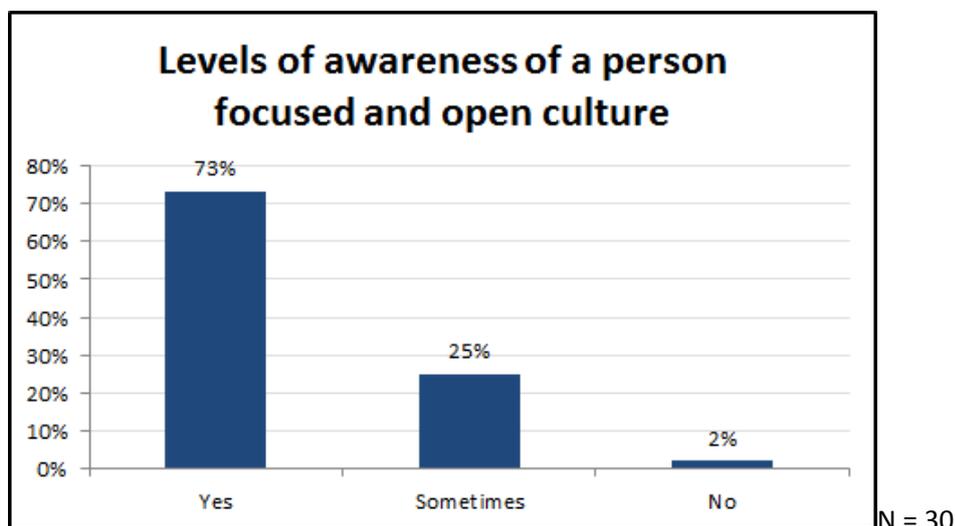
‘I find that if children’s emotions are recognised quicker, they calm quicker.’

Adults’ meta-emotion philosophy showed a replicated statistical improvement in the measures from the 2015-16 phase champions with accompanying improvement in their awareness and self-regulation. Their professional practice was transformed as they embedded this way of working with children and young people into their personal and working lives.

CASE STUDY THEME 7: a culture of openness and a joined up approach

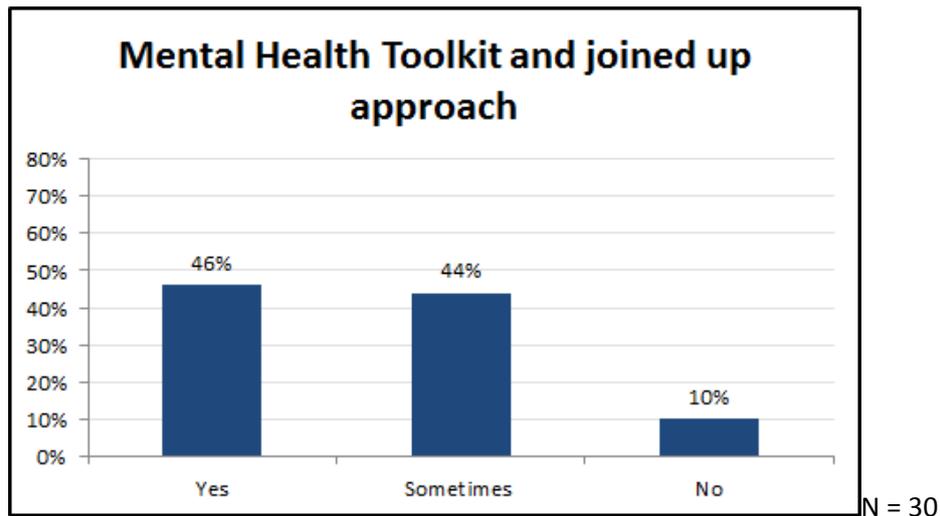
The Somerset Emotion Coaching project is underpinned by a commitment to promoting a joined up approach to supporting children and young people’s emotional health and well-being. The importance of promoting a joined up approach and facilitating a culture of openness and was recognised by champions in their responses to questions in exit questionnaires as shown in figure 11. In addition, two case studies suggested that engagement in Emotion Coaching contributed to a person centred and a joined up approach to supporting young people.

Figure 6: Total scores showing awareness of the importance of a culture that is person-focused and open



The Mental Health Toolkit (MHT) was also identified as having a role in supported a joined up approach as illustrated by Figure 12.

Figure 7: Use of Mental health toolkit and joined-up approach post Emotion Coaching training



This data shows an increase, from the 2015-16 phase, in the percentage of participants who agreed that Emotion Coaching training had contributed to their use of the Mental Health Toolkit and had facilitated a joined up approach within mental health services. The following quotes provide an illustration of participant's feedback:

'The MHT is helpful for signposting services and resources as a one-stop shop.'

'I have accessed useful websites and articles relating to issues relevant to the things that our students are most troubled by.'

In addition to evidence in questionnaires which shows participant's positive perspectives on Emotion Coaching training and a joined up approach, the following case study suggests that engagement with Emotion Coaching has facilitated a person centred approach in an educational context. The study also indicates that, when dovetailed with mental health services, there have been improved outcomes for a young person.

Case study 7: a case study illustrating how Emotion Coaching dovetails with public mental health services to support a joined up approach

Professional Role: Support Teacher Secondary
Child/Young Person: Male, Age: 15 years

Background

I had been working with Child J at home since October 2014. He had not attended school since year 9 and had become very isolated; spending much of his time in his bedroom. He had experienced several depressive episodes during which he found it difficult to get out of bed. His anxiety was such that sometimes he found it an enormous challenge to engage in conversation with others. In school he had worked at a high level academically for his age, particularly in Maths and Science, and he expressed to me how important academic success was for him. He had been taking medication for his depression for some time.

Our goal at this stage was to encourage him to move from home into the Centre for Tuition, where he could receive more appropriate support. I used Emotion Coaching as a strategy to help him to manage his extreme anxiety when we first discussed this option. I was concerned that he might shut down altogether, so I used Emotion Coaching 'scripts' to open up conversations about how he was feeling.

Outcomes

September 2015

Child J has started this academic year by attending the Centre every day for one hour and has worked in a small group with another teacher. The challenge now is to build up his timetable and integrate him into the Centre, so that he is comfortable with the other young people and other teachers.

I attribute his progress to combination of factors, including the effectiveness of his medication, his engagement with his CAMHS worker and an overall increase in confidence. During the tuition sessions, the choice of language from the Emotion Coaching scripts was carefully chosen to ensure he understood that I recognised what he was feeling and empathised with his reasons. Over time, this has enabled us to forge a much stronger relationship, and has certainly played a large part in the progress he has made to date.

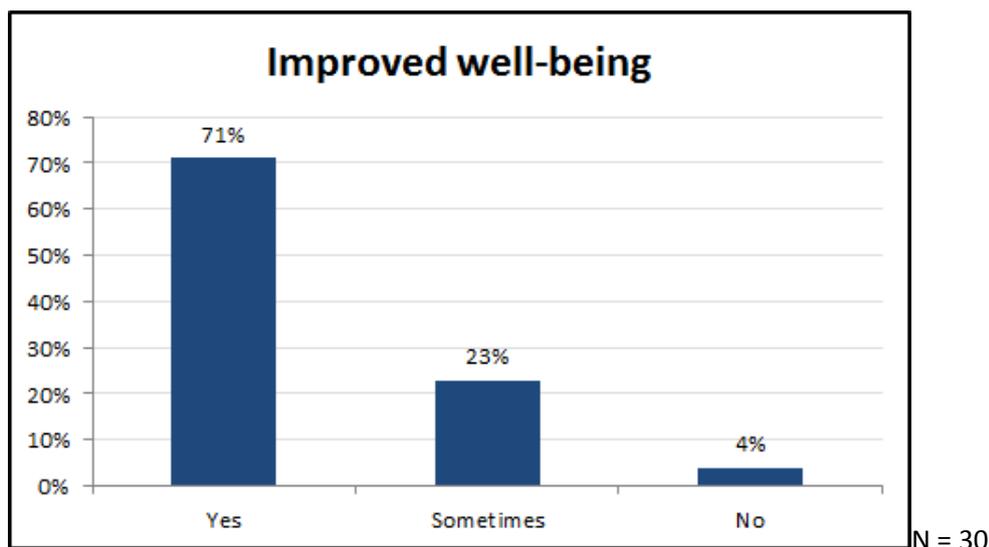
The increased resilience in a young person over a period of time suggested in this case study is credited to a joined up approach to supporting emotional health. Education and health services working together in this way is in line with a key aim of the Future in Mind (2015) report which seeks to support children and young people's mental health and well-being through improved joint working across the NHS, public health, voluntary and community, local authority, education and youth justice sectors.

The 2015-16 phase outcomes also reported how the project had contributed to a more open and person focused culture, as well as increased joined-up thinking. Both statistical and testimonies showed how Emotion Coaching can help to generate a culture of openness around emotional mental health, such as creating acceptance that it is alright to talk about emotional mental health problems. Some case studies from the 2015-16 phase illustrated how Emotion Coaching can be used to develop more person focused practice and help to open up conversations with young people.

CASE STUDY THEME 8: increased well-being in the workplace

For Champions who integrated Emotion Coaching into their everyday practices, an increase in adult well-being was an emerging theme from both quantitative and qualitative data as illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 8: Impact on well-being post Emotion Coaching training



Champions reported that improved relationships and connections with children and young people as well as the wider community of parents and carers had impacted positively on their own emotional health and well-being. Evidence from exit questionnaires suggests that through Emotion Coaching, champions recognised that they were more 'in-tune' with the emotional expressions of others. They also commented on the personal and professional rewards they had experienced as a result. The following quotes illustrate feedback from champions:

'I have a more empathic approach to all people I meet and work with. I notice how others behave and this helps me appreciate their strengths and weaknesses. I now have a more supportive approach to everyone, which has improved my own well-being.'

'I am thinking differently in both my work and personal life. (It has) benefited all my relationships.'

The following case study is an example of the positive impact of Emotion Coaching and person-centred practice on practitioners' well-being.

Case study 8: a case study showing increased enjoyment and well-being at work

Professional Role – Teacher - Primary

Child/Young person: Mixed Primary, Age: 4-11

Background

I come from a behaviour management background, where for years I worked with reward and sanction systems, like marbles in the jar. I have been teaching for 20 years and am therefore very used to trying out new techniques and strategies. I have to admit, when I first arrived at the Emotion Coaching training I was sceptical about whether it would make a difference.

However, the process of learning about Emotion Coaching and using it with children has made me a much more reflective teacher, and it has also taught me the value of listening to other people. It was particularly interesting listening to others during the workshops, and I realised that we encounter similar challenges in the workplace. I now appreciate that if we talk, we can come up with ideas together. It is

easy to develop a rather fixed mind-set and there is a danger of being too target driven and forgetting to notice the child. When I think about the history of an individual child sometimes, it is no surprise that they are finding it difficult to regulate their emotions.

On a personal level, considering children from an emotional point of view has made me feel empowered as a teacher.

Outcomes

My approach has changed and other people see that. I feel different – definitely. Emotion Coaching makes complete sense to me. I think that in the past, I had misunderstood children. Now I am far more relaxed and probably more jovial and happy to banter. I notice that I have more empathy towards others which this has led me to make some key changes to my practice.

Firstly, I use my first name now with the parents and have given the children permission to use it too, although they often choose not to!

Secondly, I have worked on just ‘being there’ more – for example being out there in the mornings to greet the parent. I also check on people – adults and children. I will now ask ‘Are you okay?’ If I see something, *I ask*.

I used to get cross with children, so that when we discussed playground incidents they had been involved in, I would have been disapproving in order to elicit some remorse – for example I might have said ‘Just look at your behaviour..’ or ‘I am so disappointed in you’ The language I use now is different. When we discuss an incident together, it is the child’s perspective I am interested in hearing, ie.

‘Tell me what you think happened?’

As well as demonstrating the personal benefits of Emotion Coaching, this case study shows that Champions felt enthusiastic and determined to promote Emotion Coaching within their organisation until it is fully embedded in practice. The case reported that modelling ‘the five steps’ of Emotion Coaching and opening up conversations with colleagues ‘in the moment’ was a particularly effective strategy to supporting others to explore Emotion Coaching within their own practice. This is in line with comments from champions in exit questionnaires.

Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is based on the work of Gottman and Katz and colleagues (Gottman et al., 1996). It is essentially comprised of two key elements - empathy and guidance. These two elements underpin the adults' approach whenever 'emotional moments' occur. Emotional empathy involves recognizing, labelling and validating a child's emotions, regardless of the behaviour, in order to promote self-awareness of emotions. The circumstances might also require setting limits on appropriate behaviour (such as stating clearly what is acceptable behaviour) and possible consequential action (such as implementing behaviour management procedures) but key to this process is guidance: engagement with the child in problem-solving in order to support children's ability to learn to self-regulate and to seek alternative courses of action, preventing future transgressions.

Gottman has described Emotion Coaching as involving 5 steps:

1. Be aware of child's responses
2. Recognize emotional times as opportunities for intimacy and teaching
3. Listen empathetically and validate child's feelings
4. Help child to verbally label emotions – helps sooth the nervous system and recovery rate
5. Set limits while helping child to problem-solve

The main research evidence base for Emotion Coaching comes from America and Australia. Randomised Control Trials in America have demonstrated that Emotion Coaching enables children to have better emotional regulation, more competent problem-solving, higher self-esteem, better academic success, more positive peer relations and fewer behavioural problems (Gottman et al., 1997). Emotion Coaching has been used to support children with behavioural difficulties (Havighurst et al., 2013; Katz and Windecker-Nelson, 2004), depression (Katz and Hunter, 2007) and those exposed to violent environments, including inter-parental violence, maltreatment and community violence (Shipman et al., 2007; Katz et al., 2008; Cunningham et al., 2009). Emotion Coaching has also been positively correlated with secure attachments (Chen et al., 2011), and used effectively reduce the externalising behaviours of children with ASD (Wilson et al., 2013). It has also recently been identified as a protective factor for children with ODD (Dunsmore et al., 2012) and for children at risk (Ellis et al., 2014).

The findings from this study correlates with other research in England. Two pilot studies (Rose et al., 2015; Gilbert et al., 2014) show that by using Emotion Coaching when children experience 'emotional moments' which may manifest as challenging behaviour, significant improvements can be made in:

- adults' attitudes to children's behaviour as adults become less 'dismissive' of children's emotions, generating a more relational model of behaviour management
- reducing the number of behavioural incidents by improving children's behaviour and ability to regulate their behaviour
- staff well-being and efficacy via the way adults manage children's behaviour and its effect on adults' reduced stress levels

Emotion Coaching appears to promote the development of social and emotional competences within

children and young people. It can be a valuable tool for practitioners in their work with children and young people. The reported improvements in adult self-regulation during behavioural incidents and enhanced social relationships with children and young people have important implications for professional practice. The common participant claims of practitioners who have been trained in Emotion Coaching testify to how it can help to generate a more consistent response to behavioural incidents, resonating with literature which highlights the importance of consistent responsiveness in promoting social and cognitive growth (for example, Landry et al., 2001). The frequent descriptions by participants of the way in which Emotion Coaching de-escalates incidents and helps both the children/young people and adults to 'calm down' suggests improvements in the stress response system and reflects how children/ young people (and adults) felt more able to regulate their emotional responses (Rose et al., 2015).

Citation:

Digby, R., West, E., Temple, S., McGuire-Snieckus, R., Vatmanides, O., Davey, A., Richardson, S., Rose, J., and Parker, R. (2017) *Somerset Emotion Coaching Project Evaluation Report: Phase Two*, Institute for Education, Bath Spa University.

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Further information about the project can be found at:

www.cypsomersethealth.org

www.emotioncoaching.co.uk

<http://attachmentawareschools.com/>