Building Emotional Competence: Interventions to Strengthen Child/Adolescent Emotion Regulation

Day 2

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Day 2: Agenda

- Intervention 2: Emotion understanding

- Intervention 3: Empathy
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Follow-up from yesterday

- Developmental “norms”
  - Early emotion “communication” around 9 months (e.g., social referencing)
  - Emotion language onset in early 2nd year (15-18 month); develops rapidly
  - Emotion labels/facial expressions: By age 2 years, can pose expressions as well as adults by 4
  - Hiding emotions by age 3
  - Complex emotions (e.g., guilt, shame) come later than “simple” ones, but studies show onset of DISPLAY in some children in toddlerhood (around ages 2-3)
  - Multiple emotions hard to train before ages 4-5 years
  - Some “empathy” behaviors (e.g., “caring”) emerge as early as age 2

A belated introduction

- How I got started and why emotion?
- What work have I done re: emotion?
- What are my current foci?

Q-card review?
Emotion Understanding

Multiple emotions

- Rationale
  - A key development for social relationships

- Basic teaching points
  - More than one feeling can occur at the same time
  - "Opposite" feelings can occur at the same time
  - Even toward the same target (person)

Multiple emotions

- Suggested activities
  - Emotional Emmy
Interactive: Emotional Emmy Game

- First a brief demonstration
- Now, your turn:
  - Choose a partner
  - Create a story about Emmy that involves BOTH emotion cards
  - Other person scores
  - Switch roles
  - Volunteers to share some of the higher scoring stories

Emotional Emmy Scoring

1 point—At least one of the emotions

3 points—Both emotions

4 points—Both emotions and at the same time

5 points—Both emotions and at the same time and at same target

Emotion education

- Rationale
  - Advanced emotion awareness—the physiology/biology of feelings

- Basic teaching points
  - Different feelings lead to specific physiological changes
    - Fear/Anxiety
    - Sadness
    - Anger
    - Happiness
Emotion education

- Expanded teaching point: Anger
  - Anger is normal.
  - Anger has physiological signs.
  - Anger makes people want to act quickly.
  - Acting on anger can lead to poor choices.
  - There are ways to cope with anger.

Emotion education

- Video

Hiding emotions

- Rationale
  - Understanding social conventions about when to hide vs. express feelings is another key for social development

- Basic teaching points
  - One's expression ≠ one's experience
  - Other's expression ≠ other's experience
  - Why/when to hide feelings
  - Goal: Rarely and strategically
  - How to hide feelings
Hiding emotions

- Expanded: When to hide feelings?
  - When expressing feelings will create social unease.
  - When the feeling may be temporary.
  - Unsafe situations.

Hiding emotions

- Suggested activities
  - Hiding feelings card game
    - Hide?
    - Why/Why Not?
    - How?
    - Demonstrate

“Could we up the dosage? I still have feelings.”
Empathy

Empathy vs. sympathy (vs. personal distress)
- Personal distress, the experience of distress when others are distressed
- Sympathy has been defined as feeling for another person.
- Empathy has been defined as feeling with another person.

Skills involved
- Emotion awareness (of other) ADVANCED
  - Appreciate the others’ emotional perspective
  - Feeling the other’s feeling
  - “Separation”

Empathy: Case Example
- Bart, 10 year old male

Based on actual cases, Bart Simpson from television program, pictured here.
Sample of Bart’s FA

- Reinforced for teasing behaviors
- Teases/bullies others
- Limited understanding of others feelings
- Empathy Intervention

Empathy Interventions

- Recognizing others’ feelings
- Sharing in others’ feelings
- Separating from others’ feelings (to help)

Recognizing others’ feelings

- **Rationale**
  - First step to empathy is accurate identification of others’ feelings (i.e., advanced awareness)
- **Basic teaching points**
  - Identifying external cues
  - Identifying situational cues
Recognizing others’ feelings

- Suggested activities
  - Feelings Jeopardy
  - Triple deck feelings detective game

Recognizing others’ feelings

- Play-along
  - Feelings Jeopardy
  - Your task:
    - WHICH emotion(s)?
    - WHAT clues did you use?

Break
Separating to help

- Rationale
  - We need to step away from the other’s feelings enough to help

- Basic teaching points
  - To help, we must separate enough from our feeling for the other
  - There are many ways to do that.

Separating to help

- Suggested activities
  - Call-in radio show

- Partner play
  - Roles: Host and Caller
  - Caller
    - Read card and improv
  - Host
    - Show Empathy & Offer Help

LUNCH BREAK
Sharing others’ feelings

- Rationale
  - To sympathize, we need to feel and understand the other’s feelings

- Basic teaching point
  - Learning to walk in another’s shoes

Sharing others’ feelings

- Suggested activities
  - Emotional Idol
  - Take one/take two

Sharing others’ feelings

- Video
Emotion Regulation: Part I

Definitions
- Emotion: regulator AND regulated
- “Dynamic ordering and adjusting” of emotion
- “Purposeful monitoring, evaluating, and modifying of emotional reactions.”
- Development moves from less/non conscious to planful

Process/Functional Model of Emotion Regulation
- Situation selection
- Situation modification
- Attention deployment
- Cognitive changes/appraisal
- Response modulation

e.g., Campos et al., 1989; Cole et al., 1990; Kopp, 1989; Thompson, 1994
Emotion regulation interventions:

Part I

- Basics
- Prevention
- Mastery
- Expression: Advanced

Emotion Regulation

- ER Basics
  - Many strategies: None are “right”
  - Sometimes more than one is needed

- Activities
  - Emotion Coping Story Game

Prevention

- Rationale
  - Emotion rooted in physiology; less-than-optimal physical health impedes ER

- Basic teaching points
  - Eating well
  - Exercise
  - Sleep well
  - Manage illnesses
Prevention:
Suggested Activities

- Eating
  - Online games
  - Monitoring
  - Family mealtimes
- Exercise
  - Schedule activities
- Sleep
  - Sleep hygiene tips
- Manage illnesses
  - Chronic vs. acute

Mastery

- Rationale and basic teaching point
  - Doing things we do well (or enjoy) help us regulate our emotions
- How to teach
  - Activity selection
  - Practice
  - Monitor
Mastery

- Troubleshooting
  - Challenges when selecting
  - Tips for successful practice
  - Tips for successful monitoring

Expression: Advanced

- Rationale
  - Expressing feelings makes it easier to deal with them

- Basic teaching points
  - Feelings point to what matters
  - Introspection on what matters is important
  - Feelings are meant to be shared
  - Feelings can be over-shared

Expression: Advanced

- Suggested activities
  - Walking the talk
  - Expressive writing
  - Game: To share or not to share
Expression: Advanced

- Video

Emotion intervention #5

Emotion Regulation: Part II

HE HAD BOTTLED UP HIS FEELINGS OVER MANY YEARS
### Emotion regulation interventions: Part I

- Basic cognitive
- Emotion-specific cognitive
  - Anger
  - Worry
  - Sadness
  - Fear

### Basic cognitive

- **Rationale**
  - Thoughts influence feelings (and vice versa); we can change (some of) our thoughts

- **Basic teaching points**
  - The thoughts-feelings-actions triangle
  - How to identify thoughts
  - How to “diagnose” thoughts
  - How to evaluate/change thoughts

### Basic cognitive

- **Suggested activities**
  - Cognitive shuttle game
  - Thought detectives game
  - “What’s your guess?” game
Basic cognitive

- Play-along
  - Cognitive shuttle
    - I will read the situation and then a thought. You give your guess for the FEELING and whether the THOUGHT will INCREASE or DECREASE the feeling intensity

How we will play

- Feelings guess
  - **Angry**: Stand and stomp feet
  - **Sad**: Put head on table
  - **Scared**: Jump up and down
  - **Happy**: Stand and lift hands above head
  - **Embarrassed**: Hide behind chair

- Intensity change guess
  - **Increase**: Clap
  - **Stay the same**: Do nothing
  - **Decrease**: Snap fingers

Card 1

- **Situation**: The teacher has just called on you.
- **Thoughts**:
  - “Oh no! I’m going to get the answer wrong!”
  - “Am I in trouble?”
  - “What was she just saying?”
  - “I’m so glad I did the homework last night.”
  - “She always picks me.”
### Card 2

**Situation:**
- Some kids are looking at you in the lunchroom.

**Thoughts:**
- “I’m wearing a cool outfit.”
- “I must have something weird on my back.”
- “They are making fun of me.”
- “They want to beat me up.”

### Card 3

**Situation:**
- You’ve called your friend three times and she hasn’t called you back.

**Thoughts:**
- “She hates me now.”
- “She must have gotten busted by her parents again.”
- “She’s spending time with her other friends and not me.”
- “Maybe she’s hurt!”

### Specific Emotion Cognitive

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Emotion-specific cognitive

- Rationale
  - Different feelings require different regulation approaches

- Anger
  - Perspective taking
  - Simulated anger situations
    - Anger memory game
    - Anger management rehearsal
  - Omniscience game

- Sadness
  - Tough circumstances vs. “distortion”
  - Always search for counter evidence

- Fear
  - How the alarm system affects thoughts
Emotion-specific cognitive

- Worry
  - Triage
- Worry sort game

Emotion-specific cognitive

- Video

LAST BREAK

KEEP CALM AND HAVE A TEA BREAK
Caregivers, diversity, and challenging clients

The cases FOR and AGAINST involving caregivers

- Reasons TO involve
  - Caring caregiver wants to help
  - Knowledge gap
  - Knowledge AND skills gap
  - Knowledge and skills gap PLUS

Some ways to involve caregivers

- Monitoring
- Support of progress
- Parallel work
- Concurrent work
Culture and emotion

- A few ways that culture affects emotion
  - Display rule variations
  - Collectivist vs. individualist cultural differences
- Implications
  - Adaptation
  - Embracing diversity

Diversity conversation

- What sorts of diversity are important/relevant here?
- What do y’all see and do to adapt?

Engaging difficult clients

- Shy/reticent client
  - Okay for YOU to do the talking
  - Try out different activities
  - Get on the move
Engaging difficult clients

- Hit or miss client
  - Patience
- Back-pocket kid
  - Consider alternative communication venues

Engaging difficult clients

- The “eff-you” client
  - Use FA to understand (and empathize)
  - Motivational enhancement approaches
    - Let’s go in-depth on this one!

Day 2 BONUS: Going In Depth on Engagement
Understanding change

- We work in the CHANGE business
- Change happens without us, of course
- Change does not always happen because of our work

A few myths about change

- Change will make things better.
- Punishment/suffering will motivate change.
- People are eager to change because of high-cost operants.
- Clients need to work harder than therapists for change to happen.

Can you spare some change?

- Ready?
  - Priorities vary
- Willing?
  - Discrepancy between current situation and goal
- Able?
  - Confidence in (ability to) access to solutions
Ambivalence and conflicts

- Approach-approach
- Avoidance-avoidance
- Approach-avoidance
- Double approach-avoidance

Stages of Change Model

(Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984)

Engagement Strategies Related to Stages of Change Model

- Participation Enhancement Intervention (PEI)
- Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET)
**Caveats**

- This is NOT an official training in either PEI or MET
- You will not be an expert in either upon leaving (unless you already are!)
- Goal: whet your appetite for these and similar interventions

**Participation Enhancement Intervention (PEI; Nock & Kazdin, 2005)**

- A Mini Motivational Enhancement Approach
- Designed as an adjunct to *parent* training
- Involves a 5-15 minute intervention completed as needed during treatment to increase motivation
- Evidence supports its use as an adjunct to parent training (Nock & Kazdin, 2005)

**Goals of PEI**

- Provide empathy and avoid confrontation
- Highlighting discrepancy between present behavior and desired outcomes
- Increase self-motivational statements
The Basics of PEI

- Before PEI, family clearly briefed on PT (i.e., good preparation for PT)
  - Goals=change in child behavior via new parent behaviors
  - Works best with regular attendance, homework compliance
  - Time-limited approach (4-6 months is typical)

- As problems arise, parent-therapist conversation structured around Change Plan Worksheet (CPW)

Overview of the Change Plan Worksheet

- Elicitation of goals
- Elicitation of barriers to goals
- Elicitation of ways to work around goals

Change Plan Worksheet

1) The changes I want to make are:
   - In my child (e.g., discipline methods)
   - In me (e.g., home routines, parenting skills)

2) The most important reason I want to make these changes are:
   - (e.g., child's behavior, health, well-being)

3) The steps I plan to take to changing are:
   - (e.g., make exercise, monitor behavior, practice)
Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET)

- Used in treating adults with alcohol and substance use problems
- Has also been adapted for many other problems (e.g., diabetes, gambling)
- Adapted for use with substance using/abusing teens
- Evidence supports its use for adults and adolescents (e.g., Project MATCH, various Miller et al. trial papers)
Strategies used in MET

- Express empathy
- Develop discrepancy
- Avoid argumentation
- Roll with resistance
- Support self-efficacy

Express empathy and acceptance

- Use active listening
  - Contrast with just plain listening
  - You are listening with a PURPOSE

- Empathy around ambivalence

- “You are not sure you want to stop yet you don’t like the consequences.”

Develop discrepancy

- Maintain awareness about imbalance of current status vs. goal

- “You say that you feel like a bad parent when you yell at Sheila and that you don’t like seeing yourself that way—you want to feel like a good parent?”
Avoid argumentation

- Use double-sided reflections instead of confrontations
- “On the one hand…on the other hand, …”

“Roll” with resistance

- Simple reflection
  - “You have made mistakes and feel badly about that, but you also think that people are making too big a deal of it.”

- Amplified reflection
  - “You don’t think there are any problems with the way you are parenting Sheila.”
  - Note: No sarcasm allowed

- Shifting focus (away from barrier toward clarifying the problem)
  - “You don’t like all of the things I ask you to do. Can you tell me more about the problems you are having at home with Sheila?”

“Roll” with resistance

- Agreement with a twist
  - “You don’t like that the school is on your back. You are also really want to be successful with some things so you can keep moving forward.”

- Emphasis on choice and control
  - “You don’t like that others are telling you to come to therapy, but so far you are choosing to follow-through. It takes strength to do that. Tell me what motivates you.”

- Reframing
  - “You are not happy about having to talk about your parenting, but so far you have met with me each week and I think you are doing a good job working.”
Resistence ≠ Client non-cooperation

Support self-efficacy
- Find past and current strengths

Decision balance sheet
- PROS
- CONS
Decision balance sheet

- **PROS**
  - The ideas seem kinda good
  - I like some of the games
  - Emotion is important for my clients

- **CONS**
  - The book looks expensive
  - My clients need more than emotion-based interventions

Day 2: Where we’ve been

- Intervention 2: Emotion understanding
- Intervention 3: Empathy
- Intervention 4: Emotion regulation: Basic
- Intervention 5: Emotion regulation: Advanced
- Other considerations

Questions?

Thanks for your attention

Contact Information: MASouthamGer@vcu.edu
Please consider buying my book