

SUPPORTING ADULTS TO DEVELOP EMOTION COACHING IN SCHOOLS

KINGSBURY SCHOOLS TOGETHER

Training Evaluation Report

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Licette Gus



KINGSBURY SCHOOLS TOGETHER

FRYENT KINGSBURY GREEN KINGSBURY HIGH OLIVER GOLDSMITH ROE GREEN INFANTS ROE GREEN JUNIOR ST ROBERT SOUTHWELL THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

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Note: Children and young people will be referred to collectively as 'children' throughout this report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 31 October 2017, a one day training in Emotion Coaching (EC) was attended by 43 members of staff from 7 schools within the Kingsbury Schools Together Cluster (Brent, London): A secondary school, 5 feeder primaries and the special provision within the cluster. Pupil population is ethnically diverse. To support the embedding of this approach as a way of communicating with children, the initial training was followed by 5 x 2 hour workshops. These workshops culminated in a celebration session where all schools involved made a short presentation about their use of EC and any impact they had noted. The workshops were attended by four staff members from each the 6 mainstream schools (N=28) and were held approximately on a fortnightly basis. The workshops started on 14 November 2017 and the Celebration Day was held on 6 March 2018.

2. KEY FINDINGS

School staff feel they are more knowledgeable and skilled in using EC as a strategy to support pupil emotional health and wellbeing

Learning about empathy- its nature, development and impact upon children's emotional development was significant for school staff on the one-day training. This suggests that relational approaches may be supportive in schools. Notable learning also related to the role of vagal tone in our body's stress response system.

Confidence and ability to use EC increased: 85% of staff report that their ability and confidence to EC had increased 'quite a lot' or 'very much so' as a result of the workshops.

Specific emotion socialisation skills used by school staff increased

All school staff perceive that their emotion talk, modelling of emotions, reactions to pupil emotions and explicit teaching about emotions increased. Of particular note was that 65% of participants felt that their reactions and responses to pupil emotions had changed "quite a lot" or "very much so". This suggests an understanding of how the school's social and emotional communicative environment can positively impact pupil development.

Staff felt their inter-personal communication and relationship skills with pupils had improved. 95% of staff noted their awareness of pupil emotions had increased "quite a lot" or "very much so" and 80% felt they were listening to children "quite a lot more" or "very much more".

EC training improved school staff self-regulation and this supports positive interactions with pupils

School staff enjoyed the opportunities for practicing various self-regulation strategies which they then shared with pupils. Staff intra-personal skills can be seen to have benefitted from the training and 70% of staff feel that their emotional awareness and self-regulation skills have increased "quite a lot" or "very much so". Staff also became more aware of the impact of pupil emotions on their own personal and professional wellbeing.

Awareness of the developmental impact of the social environment and the power of relationships to act positively for children was highlighted by all staff saying they were more aware of the impact of their own emotions when interacting with pupils and 90% of staff saying they were "quite a lot more" or "very much more" aware of this.

Pupil social and emotional functioning and emotional regulation improved

Pupils were seen to have developed both intra-personal emotional competencies as well as inter-personal skills. These resulted in improved emotional wellbeing for pupils and increased inclusion. Positive changes were noted in pupil language, interactions with other pupils, prosocial behavior, ability to regulate their behavior when needed, interactions with adults and learning. Of particular note was the increase in pupil 'kindness' and pupil ability to comply with everyday routines and procedures.

3. CONCLUSION

EC provided a structure for staff to operationalize or know “how to do” relationships with pupils in their everyday encounters with them. These ongoing relationships benefitted pupil emotional development. The training supported both staff and pupil intra-and interpersonal emotional competencies and relationships: adult-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships and communication were enhanced.

The training supported staff to adopt a relational approach promoting development of social, emotional and behavioral wellbeing for all pupils. The cumulative and reiterative nature of the training enabled school staff to plan EC implementation at different levels. Changing the use and nature of language with respect to pupil behavior was seen to be key for some schools.

Opportunities for staff to continue to develop their EC and emotion socialisation skills could be supported through: follow-up workshops, local meetings and focused observation/supported reflections/consultation for individual staff members.

Timings of workshop sessions were important to school staff. Opportunities to reflect at the end of workshop sessions was helpful.

4. BACKGROUND

a. EMOTION COACHING

EC is a tool or approach in supporting children’s behaviour, emotional mental health and well-being. It is based on the work of John Gottman and colleagues in the USA. It emphasises the importance of considering the emotions which underlie particular behaviours ‘in the moment’, before dealing with limit setting and problem solving (Gottman et al., 1996). EC views all behaviour as a form of communication and makes an important distinction between children’s behaviour and the feelings that underlie that behaviour. A key belief is that all emotions are acceptable, but not all behaviour. EC is about helping children to understand their different emotions as they experience them, why they occur and how to handle them, leading to happier, more resilient and well-adjusted children.

EC engages with adults’ beliefs, attitudes, awareness, expression and regulation of emotion, their reactions to children’s expressions and adults’ discussion and support or coaching of children’s emotions (their meta-emotion philosophy). Gottman et al’s (1996) initial research on EC drew attention to less effective ways of supporting children’s emotional regulation and subsequent behaviour. Adults who are ‘disapproving’ or ‘dismissive’ of children’s emotions tend to ignore, criticize or reprimand affect displays, particularly intensive emotions, which may often manifest as challenging behaviour. Such adults may view stress-induced emotional expression as a form of manipulation, a form of weakness and/or something that should be avoided or minimized (collectively known as emotion dismissing’). An

emotion dismissing style, whether disregarding or punitive, has a negative impact on children's emotional regulation and behavioural outcomes, which includes their mental and physical health (Gottman et al., 1996).

Research on EC in educational settings in England (Gus et al., 2017, Rose et al., 2015) complements the evidence base from the USA (Gottman et al., 1997, Katz et al., 2012, Shortt et al., 2010) and Australia and points to the efficacy of EC in supporting emotional mental health, well-being and behaviour across the age range.

The narrative provided by EC creates a communicative context for a child's emotional experiences to be explicitly and meaningfully processed within a relational dyad, and resonates with interpersonal neurobiology (Schore, 2015, Siegel, 2012). EC assists the child to develop an internal dialogue about social and emotional experiences. Research evidence shows how EC can help children and young people diagnosed with mental health and other difficulties, such as depression (Hunter et al., 2011, Katz and Hunter, 2007) and conduct behavioural difficulties (Havighurst et al., 2013, Katz and Windecker-Nelson, 2004).

A key aspect of EC is that it operates as an 'in the moment' strategy. Integral to this training programme were opportunities for participants to develop awareness of how they were feeling 'in the moment' and supporting their own strategies for self-regulation as a precursor to supporting children to regulate their feelings (co-regulation). EC facilitates practitioners to connect with children and young people and then re-direct them to more positive outcomes. EC is a form of emotion socialisation and can operate as a stabilising factor to enable children to focus their energies on learning and to help them moderate the challenges of school life and beyond.

b. TEACHER USE OF EMOTION SOCIALISATION IN SCHOOLS

Emotion Socialisation (ES) relates to the shaping of children's understanding, experience, expression and regulation of emotion (Eisenberg et al., 1998). Researchers such as (Denham et al., 2012) often use the term ES to include the following processes:

- I. Modelling of emotions. Implicit teaching that occurs and children learn which emotions are acceptable and how to express and regulate them.
- II. Responses to children's emotions. Contingent responding and reacting – encouragement or discouragement of children's emotional expression.
- III. Teaching about emotions. Adult use of deliberate instruction to help children link expressions, situations and words into coherent scripts about emotional experience.

Parents are the important socialising agent for young children. However, during development other agents also influence socialisation, peers (including siblings), teachers and other significant adults. ES is fundamental in supporting the emotional development and competence of children and young people (Klimes-Dougan and Zeman, 2007). Students with social and emotional skills are more successful in their academic learning in schools and teachers play a role in the development of these skills (Durlak et al., 2011, Jennings and Greenberg, 2009).

Extant literature on the development of social and emotional competence and skills in schools has largely focussed upon the effectiveness of curricula and at best, these approaches only demonstrate moderate positive effects (Wigelsworth et al., 2012, Wigelsworth et al., 2013 , CASEL, 2015 , Clarke, 2015). Programme implementation fidelity has often been cited as a key factor in lower than expected effect rates.

However, more recently, ideas on promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) in schools have looked beyond curricula and addressed the relational aspect of SEL. Contributing to this shift of focus is contemporary understanding about how human development is driven by relationships and enacted by a combination of coactions between an individual and their environment (Osher et al., 2018) . One finding from this ‘relational lens’ is the importance of integrating teaching of social and emotional skills through daily interactions and practices with pupils in addition to discrete lessons focusing upon SEL (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009, Littlefield et al., 2017, Durlak et al., 2011). Rather than SEL taking time from the curriculum, it can be thought of as being superimposed on top of or integrated with the curriculum and taking place across all subjects or lessons in a day. EC can support all school staff to teach social and emotional skills in their everyday interactions with pupils.

Three classroom factors have been associated with pupil SEL: classroom climate, including the development of high-quality trusting relationships (Jones et al., 2014), emotional socialisation (Denham et al., 2012 , Zinsser et al., 2015 , Gus et al., 2017 , Rose et al., 2015) and teacher social and emotional competencies (Durlak et al., 2011) These classroom, non-curricula factors, acknowledge the importance of teacher intra- and inter-personal skills and interactions (Roorda et al., 2011, Jones et al., 2013, Jones and Bouffard, 2012, Morris et al., 2013). EC supports all three of these classroom factors that promote pupil SEL.

By adopting a relational perspective about the learning and development of SEL, teacher inter-personal and intra-personal skills become key areas of focus. These teacher skills, competencies and characteristics impact across all three of the classroom factors associated with pupils SEL mentioned above.

c. EMOTION COACHING, EMOTION SOCIALISATION AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

EC makes explicit connections between the development of emotion regulation in pupils *and* knowledge and skills needed by staff to support these; EC provides a template for teachers for ‘how’ to act as effective ES agents in schools and thereby support the development of SEL in pupils.

The EC training programme developed for educational settings in the UK provides a coherent conceptual framework drawing together ideas from neuroscience, interpersonal neurobiology, developmental psychology and attachment theory (Gus et al., 2015). The EC training programme for educational settings operationalises these concepts within a practical series of steps:

Step 1: Recognise the child’s feelings and empathise with them

- Step 2: Label the feelings and validate them
- Step 3: Set limits on behaviour (if needed)
- Step 4: Problem-solve with the child

The EC training programme spends substantial periods of time on each of the individual steps within this framework. In a school setting, particular emphasis is given to the intra- and inter-personal skills inherent in Steps 1 and 2. Currently ideas and systems to universally support these skills in school staff are nascent. However, the current educational context's dominant behaviourist paradigm, has enabled skills around Steps 3 and 4 to become well-established.

The importance of Steps 1 and 2 relate to the reciprocal relationship between children's biology, their developing brains and social contexts. Empathic responses by adults are foundational to EC. Attuned empathic responses result in children connecting to and developing trust in adults; they feel emotionally safe. Adult empathy is also thought to trigger an empathic mirroring system in children. The development of empathy is elemental to subsequent prosocial behaviour (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2011).

A benefit of labelling (Step 2 of EC) is that the narrative provided by adults helps children to develop an internal dialogue about social and emotional experiences. Labelling an emotion helps to regulate it (Lieberman, 2013). As such, when labelling children's emotions, adults are supporting children, by co-regulation. Eventually the child can label the feeling themselves, supporting their ability to self-regulate.

"Teachers are the engine that drives social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and practices in schools and classroom" (Schonert-Reichl, 2017 p.1). The four steps of EC support that engine; they provide explicit guidance for staff to incorporate and develop as part of their communication and interactions with pupils.

5. AIMS OF THE TRAINING

Informed by recent research into the relational importance of the development of pupil SEL in schools, this project, aimed to support the development of pupil social, emotional and mental health through adult increased awareness, competency and use of EC (a type of ES) as part of the school day.

The key aims of the project were to promote:

1. Understanding of how to support pupil emotional health and wellbeing using EC as an ES strategy.
2. Skills in ES to support children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing.
3. Understanding and develop skills in emotional self-regulation and meta-emotion philosophy.
4. Target pupil(s) emotional regulation to develop their social and emotional functioning in school.
5. The adaption of EC into sustainable practice in school settings.

6. PROGRAMME OUTLINE

1. Initial Training Day

The programme involved an initial one-day introduction to EC. Topics covered during the day included:

- Neuroscience and physiology supporting the use of EC. Links were made to the stress response system (including polyvagal theory) and theories of attachment.
- The importance of adult meta-emotion philosophy (how we think about emotions and act in response to them).
- The theory of EC - John Gottman's work focussing on four different styles people use when dealing with emotions. A four-step framework for EC.
- How to do EC - including: practice at identifying what is and what is not EC, participating in scripted role plays that allows people to reflect upon how it feels to be the pupil and adult in both EC and emotion dismissing scenarios, identifying the underlying feelings and practice at devising EC scripts of their own.

2. Follow-up workshops

Six two-hour workshops followed the initial training. Workshops explicitly advocated the use of EC as a way of engaging in ES with children and young people. All workshops stressed the importance of adult own emotional self-awareness and wellbeing. In addition to having the opportunity to engage with EC in more detail, activities were designed to encourage adults to reflect upon their own emotional wellbeing and responses.

The first five workshops followed a similar format:

1. Each session started with practice of physical/emotional self-regulation strategies participants could use themselves but also model and use with pupils. These included: deep breathing, 7/11 breathing, progressive relaxation, sensory attention focusing and shifting activities, taking in and enhancing the good and visualisations.
2. Participants had opportunities to discuss how they had used EC in their place of work in the intervening period and consider successes and difficulties.
3. A different area of EC-related skill development or extension was addressed each week. These were:
 - The importance of non-verbal communication and how to tune into children's emotions.
 - How to use EC when a child has 'flipped their lid' – combining physical 'up' regulation with cognitive 'down' regulation.
 - Managing personal feelings when a pupil rejects us.
 - Use of Regulation Stations in class to support children's emotional awareness.
 - Critical consideration of successful and unsuccessful attempts at EC.
 - EC anxiety; an emotion that may result in more internalised behaviour.
4. Each session had opportunities for continued EC practice through the use of script writing.
5. Case Study development. Participants identified a child or group of children towards whom they would direct and monitor their use of EC over the duration of the workshops.

During the later two workshops participants shared their plans to cascade EC within their school. This included plans about how they intended to adapt, maintain and sustain EC in their practice.

The sixth and final workshop was a Celebration Session where each school presented their case studies to each other.

7. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This evaluation looks at the initial impact of this training project. A mixed methods approach using questionnaires and case studies was used.

Two different questionnaires were used to obtain information. Both questionnaires contained quantitative and open-ended questions. The first questionnaire is an evaluation form completed by hand at the end of the initial one day training session. The second, an online questionnaire, was completed at the end of the post-training workshops. Case studies were developed by participants over the course of the workshops. Case studies were reported upon during the final celebration session and as written submissions.

Questionnaire 1

Completed 31 October 2017. 35/43 (81%) evaluations were completed at the end of the training day.

The first questionnaire relating to the one-day Emotion Coaching training asked two questions. Each question had two parts, a Likert scale and an open-ended section. See Appendix A for details of the questionnaire. These simple questions were based on the principle that continuing professional development, aims for new knowledge and understanding but also that participants will incorporate these ideas/learning into their everyday practice to support children and young people. Each question was comprised of a 5-point Likert scale (1= not at all, 5 = a lot). Confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability of the questionnaires was guaranteed.

Question 1: Do you feel the training has raised your understanding of how to Emotion Coach?

In addition, participants were asked for about three things they had learned or learned more about:

Question 2: Do you think you will be able to use Emotion Coaching in your work with pupils, school and families?

Participants were asked to comment in which ways they thought they could use Emotion Coaching in their work.

Questionnaire 2

20/28 (71%) participants completed the online questionnaire between 22 February 2018 and 25 March 2018.

In the development of the second questionnaire, I was keen to minimise additional work and not add pressure to already hard-working school staff. The questionnaire was designed so that as little time as possible was needed (or perceived to be

needed) for it to be completed. Following an informal survey of workshop participants about preferences for mode of completion, the questionnaire was completed online. Factors which improve response rate to online surveys were able to be incorporated in the questionnaire (Fan and Yan, 2010). Confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability of the questionnaires was guaranteed.

Questionnaire 2 was a retrospective change measurement tool. A mixture of closed (Likert scale) and open questions were used in the design. It asked participants to consider: a) how their thinking and actions had changed as a result of the EC embedding workshops, b) the impact of their EC upon various aspects of target pupil(s) social and emotional functioning at school. See Appendix B for details of the questionnaire.

Likert scales were selected to gather the closed data. The advantage of this type of scale is that it enables participants to respond flexibly and for quantitative analysis (Cohen, 2011). There is no assumption of equal intervals between the categories, that is, a rating of 4 does not suggest that it is twice as strong as 2.

The questionnaire consisted of nine lead questions. The first seven of these related to the workshops directly. The first four workshops questions related to participant personal skills and knowledge and impact upon focus child(ren):

Question 1: Participant personal competencies

Question 2: Specific skill-enhancement topics addressed in each workshop

Question 3: Emotion socialisation practices

Question 4: Changes noted in pupils: language, learning, interactions with others, regulation of behaviour, prosocial behaviour, antisocial behaviour.

These first four questions comprised a number of sub-questions. Each sub-question was scored on a 5 point Likert scale:

1= Not at all

2 = A little

3 = Somewhat

4 = Quite a lot

5 = Very much so

At the end of each lead question, there was the opportunity for participants to provide comments.

Items 5-7 of the questionnaire dealt with the overall nature of the workshops. Question 5 asked participants to rate the workshops on the 5-point Likert scale, Questions 6 and 7 asked two open ended questions: about what participants liked about the workshops and what they would recommend changing.

Question 8 asked about additional training participants felt would be useful, whilst the Question 9 provided participants with the opportunity to make any other comments, observations or suggestions.

Case Studies

Workshop participants were asked to identify and develop an EC case study for the duration of the workshops. This case study could be an individual child they worked with regularly or a small group of pupils. The rationale behind the case study was to give participants a focus to their use and development of EC for the duration of the workshops. The case study would enable ongoing reflection of successes and challenges. It would also provide local evidence of use and support implementation plans for their particular school. 13 case studies were presented during the celebration day or at the end of the series of workshops.

8. OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

Questionnaires 1 and 2 and case studies will be discussed together as the data aimed to measure knowledge and understanding with regards to embedding EC in practice. Although the case studies were primarily used to support embedding of EC as an approach into everyday practice, data and stories obtained about these also highlight impact for pupils.

The questionnaires relate to measures from two time periods: (i) after one-day training and (ii) after attending five post training workshops. Results will include discussion of quantitative and qualitative measures. However, due to the small numbers involved, statistics will be descriptive as opposed to inferential.

Findings from the projects are set out in accordance with the project aims.

Aim 1: To promote understanding of how to support the emotional health and wellbeing using EC as an ES strategy

Outcome1: Increased understanding and confidence to use EC

Outcome 2: Staff feel better able to support pupil emotional and behavioural development

Outcome1: Increased understanding and confidence to use EC

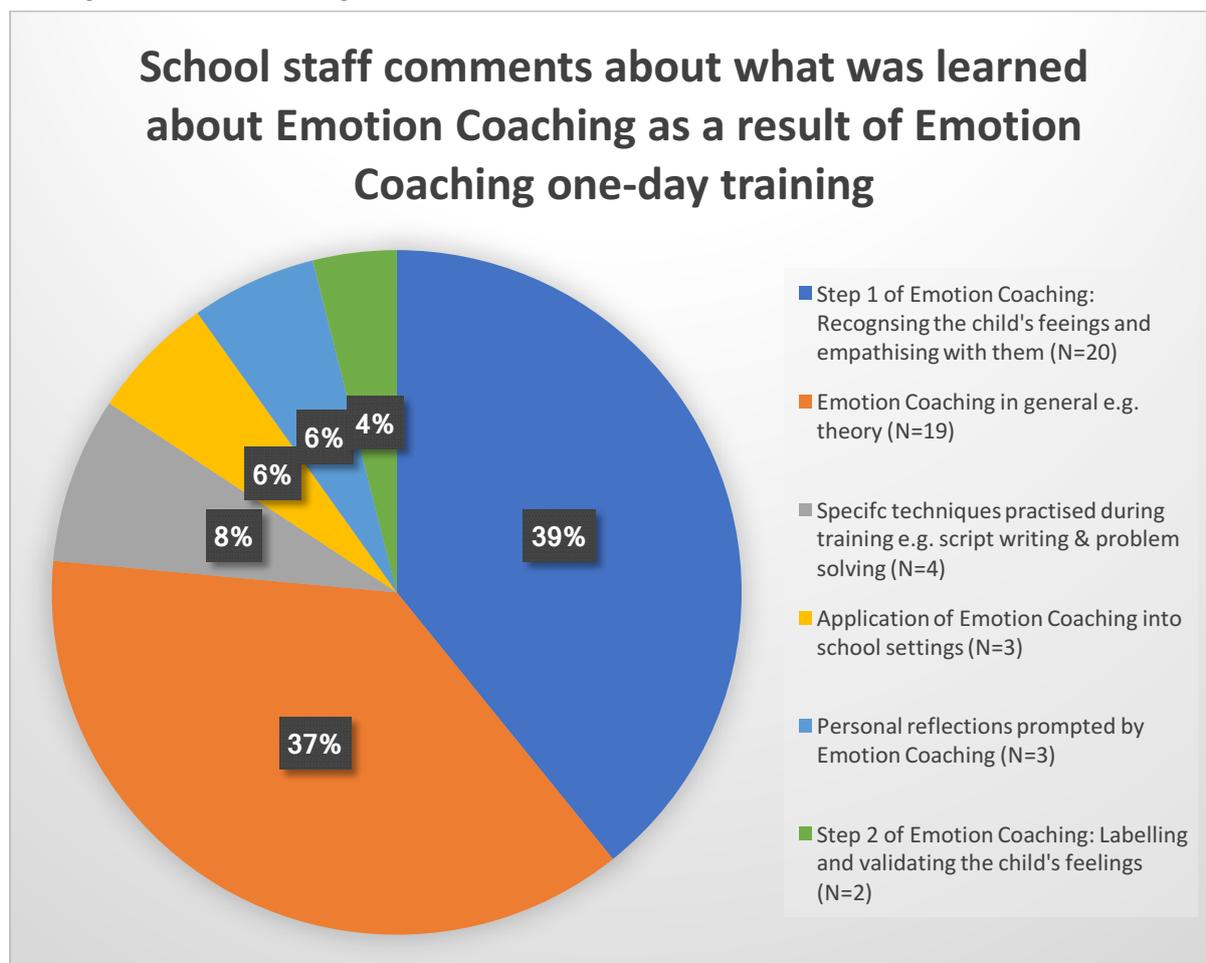
Of those who completed the one-day training, 81% (N=35) completed the evaluations. The average response to the question “Do you feel the training has raised your awareness of how to Emotion Coach” was 4.6 (Range = 4-5, Median = 5 and Mode = 5). This suggests the training supported increased understanding of EC.

Participants were asked to comment on three things they had learned or learned more about. Thematic analysis was conducted on the comments. 55 (67%) comments related to EC and 27 (33%) related to neuroscience and physiology of emotions. Of those relating to the neuroscience and physiology of emotions, vagal tone was the most positively identified aspect of training.

Figure 1 illustrates different sub-themes related to EC. The largest number of comments relate to Step 1 of EC and suggests that school staff had reflected upon the approach being preferred for consideration; a relational approach to supporting pupil social and emotional development. The relational approach (EC) begins with adult empathy with a pupil's feeling as opposed to judgement about their behavior. Most of the comments relating to Step 1 of Emotion Coaching highlighted that learning about empathy- it's nature, development and impact of empathy on children's emotional development had been significant for them. This suggests that explicit relational approaches may be supportive in schools.

Learning about empathy- its nature, development and impact upon children's emotional development was significant for school staff

Figure 1. Staff comments about what was learned about Emotion Coaching from the one-day training in Emotion Coaching



N=35

Questionnaire 2, asked if participants had a better understanding of how to do EC and if they were more confident in their ability to use EC. These results are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Teacher’s perceived skill development in EC following post-training workshops.

Area of professional development	1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Somewhat	4 Quite a lot	5 Very much so
Understanding of how to do EC	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	8 (40%)	9 (45%)
Confidence in being able to EC	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	9 (45%)	8 (40%)

Taken together these responses suggest that the post-training workshops increased school staff confidence and ability to EC. 85% of staff reported that their ability and confidence to EC had increased ‘quite a lot’ or ‘very much so’ as a result of the workshops. However, there was awareness that for some, more time was needed to adopt and sustain the new practice. One participant commented that,

“I feel more confident, but I do feel I need more time and more child experience to turn some bad habits around”.

When considering these responses, it must be borne in mind that some participants will already have been using EC in their everyday interactions with children and young people and for these people, there may not have been significant changes in their confidence or ability to use an EC communication style. As one participant commented,

“this is very much how I have always worked, now perhaps just using some slightly different phrases”

and another wrote,

“this hasn’t changed the way I work, more reinforced it”.

EC training can be seen to be positive for these practitioners whose existing practices are complementary to EC. Training for professionals already knowledgeable and skilled with using EC has been shown to validate their practice and increase professional confidence which itself can be empowering (Gilbert, 2018).

Outcome 2: Staff feel better able to support pupil emotional and behavioural development

On Questionnaire 2, all participants noted some degree of improvement in being better able to support pupils emotional (and behavioural development) with 85% of participants reported feeling “quite a lot” or “very much so “. Initial skill levels will have affected the amount of perceived change however, experienced and skilled staff noted further skill personal enhancement as a result of the workshop training,

“I have always had an understanding of the children’s emotional needs. I am empathetic and I take their needs seriously. The training has been beneficial to me by introducing me to a different approach which has emphasized the need to take more time to listen to children and the importance of acknowledging that you know how a child is feeling”.

Comments such as this also demonstrate the acceptance of the reciprocal communicative aspect of EC.

School staff feel better able to support pupil social and emotional development

Aim 2: To promote school staff skills in ES to support children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing

Outcome1: Perceived increase in use of ES

Outcome 2: Increased awareness of inter-personal skills relevant to EC

Outcome1: Perceived increase in use of ES

ES was not referred to explicitly within the workshops, however, the steps of EC address all aspects of the ES construct.

Question 3 on Questionnaire 2 specifically addressed if school staff felt they had increased individual aspects of ES. Results are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Teacher’s perceived change in their use of different aspects of emotion socialisation following EC post-training workshops.

Teacher’s perceived changes in use of emotion socialisation	1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Somewhat	4 Quite a lot	5 Very much so
Emotion Talk	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)
Modelling about how to manage emotions	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	5 (25%)
Reaction and response to pupil emotions	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	6 (30%)	6 (30%)	7 (35%)
Explicit teaching about emotions	0 (%)	4 (20%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)

When considering this table, it must be borne in mind that no change does not mean that training was not effective. Some participants will already have been effective emotion socialisers. No or little change can also reflect the nature of the participants role in school. Senior leaders may not spend very much time with pupils. As one SENCO wrote,

“my SENCO role in the school does not enable me to spend much time with pupils. It has become an administrative and advisory role.....I am in the position though to advice staff to use this method”.

School staff participating in the post-training workshops felt they had increased their use of various emotion socialisation strategies. Particularly salient was the finding that staff felt their own responses to pupil emotions had changed (65% of staff felt this had increased “quite a lot” or “very much so”). This numerical finding is supported by qualitative comments,

“It is much easier working with the pupils and actually feels good not to flip my lid too!”.

In one case study, a relational rather than behavioral approach was effective; the staff member paid attention to the pupil’s emotions rather than using sanctions,

“Emotion Coaching works extremely well compared to telling the pupil off or threatening to phone his dad”.

Another participant mentioned that even when s/he felt stressed, EC enabled his/her responses to children to be,

“non-judgmental and accepting of where the child is emotionally”.

A case study delivered during the celebration day also mentioned that the adult was being more aware of her emotions and emotional responses to pupils and that as a result “dual-regulation” was occurring.

Comments from some participants suggest that staff focussed to a greater extent upon attunement, and directing their efforts towards empathic understanding of what a child might be feeling and why.

This perceived change in adult responses to pupil emotions (and behavior) suggests the workshops supported staff to engage with ideas of the importance of interpersonal relationships in pupil development and learning and adopted or increase strategies that promote ES. Opportunities to reflect upon their meta-emotion philosophy during the training sessions will have supported change in adult responses (Katz et al., 2012 , Rose et al., 2015). These results are consistent with the theme of increased professional practice reported in the pilot study to apply EC strategies in professional contexts (Rose et al., 2015).

The wholistic integrated approach of EC provided a framework and supported school staff’s willingness and ability to engage in the full range of ES strategies.

Teachers perceive a change in their response to pupil emotions (and behavior)

Outcome 2: Increased awareness of interpersonal skills relevant to EC

All participants noted increased awareness of pupil emotions with 95% of participants reporting that they were “quite a lot” or “very much more” aware of their pupils’ emotions/feelings”.

One of the workshop extension activities focussed on paying attention to children’s non-verbal communication and body language. These can help us identify what emotion a child might be feeling. One participant found this approach a very helpful way to help her attune to her pupils and noted that the workshops,

“allowed me to get a better understanding of children’s body language”

as a result of this the teacher reported being better able to,

“engage with how he feels that day”.

All participants felt that they were listening to their pupils more as a result of the post-training workshops and 80% of participants felt that they were listening “quite a lot more” or “very much more”. Increased awareness of and actual listening to pupils was highlighted throughout the case study presentations. Taking time to listen to pupils at all times, not just during times of distress or stress was noted. A participant said that s/he now takes,

“the time to listen to him when he wants to share great events that have occurred during the week”.

The benefits of older pupils feeling that they are actively listened to by adults in schools sometimes resulted in them using verbal language much more readily to share or explain their feelings. Empathic adult listening and increased pupil use of language to explain how they are feeling is consistent with the development of pupil trust in adults noted by Gus et al. (2017).

School staff are more aware of pupil emotions and are listening more to their pupils

Aim 3: To promote understanding and develop skills in emotional self-regulation and meta-emotion philosophy

Outcome1: Personal emotional awareness and self-regulation skills improved

Outcome 2: Increased awareness of the impact of (own) emotions in interactions with pupils

Outcome 3: Increased awareness of the impact of pupil emotions on school staff personal and professional wellbeing

Outcome1: Personal emotional awareness and self-regulation skills improved

All participants felt that the post-training workshops increased their understanding of self-regulation strategies with 70% saying that it had increased “quite a lot” or “very much so”. School staff enjoyed the regular opportunities for practising various regulation strategies,

“this was an opportunity to not only emotionally coach children but also mindfulness about my own emotions”.

Individual school presentations on the celebration day highlighted how staff had shared these exercises and skills with pupils who also enjoyed them (sometimes to school staff’s surprise). One pupil, who took part in an EC-focussed case study group said that he enjoyed it when,

“we closed our eyes and took deep breathes and thought of a happy place – we were very calm and relaxed”.

During the Celebration Day presentations, many references were made as to how participants felt they were better regulated themselves and so not so stressed at work in their interactions with pupils. One participant was explicit in the professional benefits of self-regulation,

“I have learnt how important it is to self-regulate myself in a situation or even before a situation occurs. This has helped me to deal with situations in a much more positive way”.

“Stressed out teachers tend to have stressed out students” (Schonert-Reichl, 2017 p. 137). Teacher stress levels are of direct concern for teachers but also indirectly for the pupils whom they teach. This series of workshops supported adults in schools to consider, learn about and regulate their stress levels and emotional responses to situations at work (and home). Improved adult-self regulation and wellbeing as a result of engaging in EC is consistent with that found by Gus et al. (2017) and Rose et al. (2015).

Improved school staff self-regulation supports positive interactions with pupils

Outcome 2: Increased awareness of the impact of (own) emotions on interactions with pupils

All participants said that they were more aware of the impact of their own emotions when interacting with pupils with 90% responding that they were “quite a lot” or “very much so more aware of this”. School staff were able to use the workshops as an opportunity for professional self-reflection and development,

“I liked that the workshop made me reflect on my own teaching and also my own emotions towards the children in class”.

Outcome 3: School staff increased awareness of the impact of pupil emotions on their personal and professional functioning and wellbeing

Central to the workshops was raising awareness of the reciprocal nature of our interactions with pupil: adult emotions have an impact upon pupils and vice versa. Adult responses to pupil displays of emotions are guided by individual meta-emotion philosophy. One of the workshops focussed upon the impact on staff of a particular type of pupil behavior: pupil rejection of teachers. School staff identified that pupils can reject them on a daily basis both as individuals (personally) and professionals (see Appendix A for details of pupil rejecting behaviours and the feelings this can elicit in school staff). The feelings elicited in school staff by pupil rejection of them, as people and of their efforts, can add to teacher stress by depleting their psychosocial resources of control, self-worth and belongingness (Eisenberger and Lieberman, 2004).

19/20 participants felt that they were more aware of the personal impact of pupil rejection of their efforts with 75% saying they were “quite a lot” or “very much more aware” of this.

Aim 4: To promote pupil emotion regulation and develop social and emotional functioning at school

Outcome1: Improvement in pupil emotional competencies and social and emotional wellbeing

Outcome 2: Improvement in pupil social and emotional skills

Outcome1: Improvement in pupil emotional competencies and social and emotional wellbeing

Case studies were able to highlight changes that might be attributed to EC. Information from the case studies indicate that pupil wellbeing improved as a result of adult use of EC. Pupils were noted as being more confident, having improved

self-esteem, appearing happier at school, were smiling a lot (as opposed to never smiling) and as more calm. One Year 6 pupil said,

“it has helped improve my self-esteem and has somehow controlled my anger”.

Case study analyses highlighted that many case study pupil’s emotional competencies improved with the introduction of adult EC. Pupils were noted to be able to: take perspectives other than their own, be more empathic towards peers, be able to consider the feelings of others, identify why someone might be worried or upset and able to accept praise. This is consistent with the findings from (Gus et al., 2017) which highlighted how EC supported children’s emotional development improving their ability to regulate emotions.

Outcome 2: Improvement in pupil social and emotional skills

Questionnaire 2 asked staff to consider aspects of their focus pupils’ social and emotional competencies. Participants were asked to consider any positive changes noted in pupils during the course of the five workshops (14 November 2017 – 20 February 2018). Responses are found in Table 3.

Table 3: Positive changes noted for specific pupils(s) over three months since starting EC training.

Area of social and emotional competency	1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Somewhat	4 Quite a lot	5 Very much so	Average weighted score
Language	1 (5.3%)	2 (10.5%)	7 (36.8%)	8 (42.1%)	1 (5.35)	3.6
Learning	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	0 (0%)	2.85
Interactions with adults	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	10 (50%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	3.15
Interactions with other pupils	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	3.3
Ability to regulate behavior when needed	0 (0%)	5 (25%)	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	3.25
Prosocial behaviour	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	3.25
Anti-social behaviour	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	3.2

Language

Positive changes in pupil language was noted by 19/20 participants with 47% of participants responding that pupil language had improved “quite a lot” or “very much so”. One case study remarked that the pupil now,

“Is able to use language to express emotions”

Explicit use of the language of emotions by adults is promoted within the EC framework. In Step 2, adults label and validate children’s emotions. Participants in these workshops could be seen to co-regulate pupil’s emotions when they labelled and validated their emotions. Pupil use of language to express their emotions could

be viewed as an indication of internalising the language/narrative of their experience. This process is supportive of the development of emotional regulation.

Interaction with peers

Pupil social interaction with peers was a common concern for participating school staff. 5/13 case studies cited this a reason when selecting a pupil for their case study. All participants noted positive changes in pupil interactions with their peers with 40% noting “quite a lot” or very much” change. Information from case studies provide some clarity: there was less conflict in the playground, less confrontational behaviour with peers and pupil friendships improved and increased. As a result of improved interactions with peers, pupils were able to be more successful, included and participate more fully within the school. Pupils said,

“I can go out to the playground and play hockey now because I’m kinder to other children and they’re kinder back to me”.

‘It’s helped me by making friends. I used to get into fights with X but now we’re playing awesome!’

One school used EC to support restorative practices. They felt this has enabled situations between students to be resolved much more quickly.

Improved interaction with peers appeared to be achieved for many pupils in a relatively short period of time. There is overlap between the development of peer interaction and prosocial behaviours (discussed next). Modelling of empathic responses from adults will have supported children to help develop empathic responses themselves. Empathic for others is integral to the development of social interactions, friendships and prosocial behavior (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2011).

Prosocial behaviour

Considering the development of prosocial behavior reflects the current societal context of enhancing positive qualities (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

All participants felt that pupils had increased their prosocial behavior. In particular, the development of ‘kindness’ was mentioned on several occasions during case study presentations. One Year 3 boy who often used physical aggression to sort out problems and had difficulties forming and maintaining friendships was now,

“kinder to the girls in his class. The pupil has identified that he would like to become kinder to the boys in this class too”.

Other specific prosocial behaviours that were reported to have developed for case studies pupils were: children being more respectful to others, offering to help in a lunchtime club, cooperating in joint play, increased compliance with day to day procedures and running of the school. One pupil mentioned that as a result of the EC input from his teacher,

‘it helped me behave and be more respectful to others. If someone gets hurt, then you can take them to welfare and you can be proud of yourself’.

EC is supportive of prosocial behavior as adult empathy it is thought to trigger an empathic mirroring system in children – empathy is foundational for prosocial behavior. School staff empathic responses, to children’s difficult feelings appears to have been supportive of pupil prosocial behaviour.

EC supported pupil ‘kindness’

Regulation of behavior

All workshop participants felt that their focus pupils had improved in their ability to regulate their behavior when needed with 40% feeling this had improved ”quite a lot” or “very much so”. One secondary school participant noted that a pupil was now able to,

“listen to me without interrupting, shouting me down or talking over me”.

EC had been supportive for pupils who were anxious about friendships and their work in class. A teaching assistant wrote that EC had helped a boy who worried about work in class. It,

“encouraged him to calm down and then continue with the task without being reduced to tears”.

A pupil who always struggled returning into class after playtimes and lunchtime was,

“coping better at these times and returning more quickly to the classroom....he is ready to learn and engage with his learning”

Improved pupil behavioural regulation noted here is consistent with other research looking at the use of EC in educational settings (Gus et al., 2017 , Rose et al., 2015). Over time, with an increased ability to regulate their emotions, pupil behavior also becomes more regulated.

EC supported pupils to regulate their emotions of anger and fear; this had a positive impact upon their behavior

Anti-social behavior

All 4 steps of EC may result in a reduction in pupil anti-social behavior. 17/20 post-training workshop participants felt that there had been a reduction in anti-social behaviour in their focus pupil(s) with 45% reporting that this had reduced ”quite a lot” or “very much so”. Comments from case studies suggested that this related to a decrease in confrontational behaviours with peers, a decrease in hostility towards

adults, a decrease in conflict on the playground and increased compliance with adults and school procedures.

Steps 3 and 4 of EC: setting limits on behavior and helping the child to problem solve can be seen to be critical to the reduction in anti-social behaviour. However, this must be preceded by an attuned empathic response from adults (Gottman and Declaire, 1997). Once a child is feeling calm, safe and listened to, the trust that has been developed in the adult enables the child to consider alternative ways to achieve their goal.

Interactions with adults

All workshop participants felt that their focus pupils had improved in their interactions with adults, with 30% feeling this had improved "quite a lot" or "very much so". EC has been shown to improve relationships in schools (Gus et al., 2017 , Rose et al., 2015 , Rose et al., 2017). It is thought that the attunement and empathy inherent in EC promotes attachment-style relationships for pupils at school. This is where pupils trust adults and the relationships helps them feel 'safe' (Bergin and Bergin, 2009). Pupils who were the focus of school staff EC can be seen to have developed increased confidence and trust in these adults: pupils were said to now seek support from adults, talk to staff whereas once they did not and willingly ask adults for help or support. Several mentions were made of how pupils were now complying with everyday routines and procedures of the school. One school, is using EC to support their restorative practices. This has enabled situations between students and teachers to be resolved much more quickly.

Pupils have improved in their ability to comply with everyday routines and procedures of the school

Learning

18/19 participants felt that pupil learning had improved since the start of EC, with 20% considering this to be "quite a lot" or "very much so". Case study comments made mention of pupils participating more in class, being more engaged in lessons and having increased focus and attention. Increased attendance for a secondary pupil was observed. One case study included a comparison of two pieces of writing. The literacy development evident for this primary aged pupil was remarkable.

Classroom academic learning would be expected to be the final or slowest aspect to develop in children whose social and emotional skills are weak because of the emotional demands of learning and the social nature of classrooms. Children need to be emotionally ready to learn as learning itself is an emotional challenge: a child needs to be able to manage feelings of uncertainty and potential failure whenever faced with a new task or skill. One would expect that over time, as pupils are more engaged, participating more and able to attend and focus on tasks for longer, that learning would improve. Gus et al. (2017) highlighted how attainment improved over a two-year time span following the introduction of EC.

Focus pupil difficulties interacting with peers was a concern for many school staff. These interactional difficulties will also have an impact in the classroom and learning as well as on the playground. As many case studies identified, children bring into the classroom the difficulties and incidents that had occurred on the playground: children's focus is not then on learning and the task at hand. Group work may also be difficult for children who find it difficult to cooperate, share or take turns. The development of social interaction skills is a precursor to many different types of academic learning.

Aim 5: To promote the adaption of EC into sustainable practice in school settings

Outcome: Schools have plans to adapt EC for their settings, this includes: staff development, curriculum development and extending provision

Outcome: School have plans to adapt EC for their settings. This includes: training of staff, curriculum development and extending provision

Questionnaire 1 completed at the end of the initial one-day training asked participants if they thought they would be able to use EC in their work with pupils, schools and families. The average response was 4.4 (Range 3-5, Median = 4, Mode = 4). Initial thoughts as to how they might do this related to participants supporting individual pupils, modelling EC with other staff members, in meetings with parents and introducing EC into the curriculum.

Time was allocated in all post-training workshops for participants to consider and develop plans to embed EC in their schools. These plans were shared in the final two workshops and Celebration Day presentations. Plans can be grouped under three headings: staff development, curriculum development and extending provision. Overarching these three headings was the use of language in schools. Several schools mentioned the desire to change the language used in school in relation to behavior.

1. Staff Development

Many schools stated their intention to deliver training to all staff in their school. The nature of this varied, some schools wanted to develop bespoke EC sessions for different groupings of school staff, others wanted to initiate development through the sharing of their case studies. One school felt that the development of EC scripts for particular pupils would be helpful for staff.

2. Curriculum Development

Some schools had thought about how EC could be used to enhance their current curriculum. Adding EC to PSHCH/Circle Time, incorporating EC into Drama lessons and encouraging the use of regular attention shifting/focusing (meditation) sessions in class were all ideas as to how EC might be adapted and adopted. Sharing the

ideas and practice of EC with parents was planned for by a couple of schools. This would enhance the home-school curriculum, promoting shared language and practice.

3. Extending Provision

Schools had various ideas as to how they could adapt EC to extend the provision they make for pupils. These included:

- a. Peer mentoring programmes, whereby upper KS2 pupils would learn the skills of EC. The aim behind this would be to enable pupils to support other pupils but also to develop their own emotional skills in readiness and support for their transition to secondary schooling
- b. Stop and Chat spaces - places for children to talk in the school
- c. Establishing Regulation Stations in classrooms to help pupils develop and practise their emotional regulation and reflection skills
- d. Purchasing EC Lanyard cards to act as reminders and prompts for staff

School staff are keen to change the language used in schools around behaviour

9. PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE OF TRAINING

Success of training

Questionnaire 2 asked respondents to rate the post training workshops out of 5 stars. The average rating was 4.4. (Range = 3-5, Median= 4/5 and Mode= 5).

Useful aspects of training

Comments on post-training workshop usefulness related to professional aspects, the content and structure of the course and the trainer.

1. Professional Benefits

Staff appreciated the opportunity to: reflect on their own teaching, explore ideas for using EC in their schools and talk to and share ideas with other professionals from Kingsbury Schools Together cluster.

For some participants, the experience provided by the workshops was very powerful and for one participant,

“it reminded me of why I wanted to work with children and reminded me of my core beliefs”.

For another teacher, the professional and personal benefits of the workshops overlapped and the sessions,

“changed my way of thinking...made me feel more confident in all aspects”.

Several staff made comments that they felt EC training should be available to all staff in schools.

2. Content

Staff specifically mentioned the usefulness of: the idea of EC, the science behind it, the case studies, the theoretical understanding of the mind, active participation in self-regulation strategies, strategies and resources provided and video clips used.

3. Trainer

Participants appreciated the trainer's delivery style, knowledge, enthusiasm, conviction and passion.

Recommended changes

1. Timing of workshop sessions

By far the most comments about recommendations for changes to the workshops related to the timing of the training sessions. A number of staff felt rushed, constrained and unable to sufficiently reflect upon the content of the workshops as they needed to return to school at the end of training for various school duties/obligations.

2. Additional resources

A few comments related to additional resources that participants would find useful. These included: watching more videos of EC in practice, further sheets/activities to consider good and less effective practice and additional sheets with suggested language for specific emotions (similar to the anxiety one that was shared).

Further training needs

Comments were made about the desire for: a follow up session in a years time, observation of practitioner use of EC in schools and a focus on using EC with: groups, specific gender and secondary schools.

10. LIMITATIONS

The nature of the project meant that school staff report and self-report were the sole means of obtaining information. Opportunities to gather data about staff and pupil competencies and change via interviews and observations would add validity to the findings.

The design of the questionnaire was a retrospective change 'post-test only' tool. A retrospective measurement tool is able to account for changes in participant understanding after training and so improve internal validity. However, it can be cognitively challenging to complete and response biases are possible due to the 'halo' effect (where changes not directly related to the intervention are attributed to it). Post-test only designs can also lead to more socially desirable responses.

11. CITATION

Gus, L. (2018) *Supporting adults to develop Emotion Coaching in Schools*. Kingsbury Schools Together Emotion Coaching Training Project Evaluation Report.

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APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

Pupil rejection of teachers

Teachers can feel rejected by pupils when pupils:	How teachers feel when they are rejected by pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse to follow any instructions • Refuse to cooperate with adult's request • Refusal to engage / • Tell you they don't like you in which pupils can reject us • Ignore you • Call you names • Make personal comments about you • Swear at you • Act defiantly • Push you physically • Disrupt continually / • Talk over you • Compare you to other staff • Reject help • Don't see you as an individual, refer to you as "you lot" • Walk out/off • Refuse to attend school trips • Refuse to communicate • Make physical gestures of rejection to you e.g. holding up their hand • Attempt to provoke arguments • Back chat (tone of voice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scared • Rejected • Embarrassed / • Annoyed • Drained • Lose your spark • Hurt • Lose confidence • Concerned for child's well-being • Question your own practices – their effectiveness • Defiant • Deflated • Sad • Angry • Powerless / • Railroaded • Exhausted • Begin not to care • Frustrated