



The Centre for Emotional Health

ABOUT US

Contents

OUR VISION.....	4
OUR MISSION	4
WHAT IS EMOTIONAL HEALTH?.....	5
WHY IS EMOTIONAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?.....	6
THE ETHOS BEHIND OUR PROGRAMMES.....	9
OUR PROGRAMMES AND TRAINING COURSES	12
THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK.....	16
WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US.....	19
CONTACT US.....	21
OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE.....	22



The Centre for Emotional Health

Welcome to Family Links!

We are passionate about our vision of everyone living an emotionally healthy life. Since 1997, we have reached over 1.3m parents and children by training over 38,000 professionals who go on to work across the community in local authority services including Family Hubs, in schools, the voluntary sector, health, prisons and in faith organisations. Our relationship-centred approach means we work in a collaborative way and in partnership wherever possible.

At a national level, we raise awareness of what Emotional Health is and why it is important, influencing policy to create a more emotionally healthy society.

I hope you find this leaflet interesting and helpful and that it prompts you to get in touch. We are always delighted to host visits to our offices in Oxford or to meet wherever works for you.

Peter Leonard

Chief Executive

OUR VISION

Everyone living an emotionally healthy life

OUR MISSION

Promoting an approach to life and relationships that equips and supports families and communities to be emotionally healthy.

We provide high quality training courses and resources for professionals working with families, parents and carers, including foster carers and adoptive parents, in a variety of settings. Underpinned by the Nurturing Programme, all our courses and resources develop understanding, skills and the ability to support the development of emotional health.

Note: Family for us is an inclusive word and means not only those connected biologically; it can include anyone who is special in our life.

Our approach is relational and empowering and highlights the link between behaviour and feelings in the context of relationships; and our programmes develop self-awareness, empathy and self-regulation, supporting people to build and maintain positive relationships.

Adults and children need others who will:

- Have appropriate expectations and clear boundaries
- Show empathy and help to manage difficult feelings

- Listen and show warmth and interest
- Develop a positive climate in which to grow, learn and work
- Praise, encourage and stimulate their learning
- Help them to feel positive about themselves as people, as well as their abilities
- Support them with problem solving and promote autonomy.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL HEALTH?

Emotional health is the set of skills and beliefs that shape our thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It is affected throughout our lives by our relationships and our experience of the relationships around us.

What does good emotional health look like?

Good emotional health is being aware of, understanding and managing our whole range of emotions. Positive relationships support us to build healthy beliefs about ourselves and others.

Our emotional health model

There are seven components of emotional health, and while each is important within its own right, it's how they work together that forms our emotional health.

The seven components of emotional health are:

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness

- Self-beliefs
- Self-agency
- Beliefs about others
- Self-regulation
- Relationship skills.

Having good emotional health supports us with how we feel, think, behave and interact with those around us. These skills and beliefs impact our quality of life as well as providing us with protective factors if we're experiencing physical or mental health problems.

WHY IS EMOTIONAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?

In order to build and sustain healthy relationships, we need to have responsive relationships with others. This is a key component of good emotional health. We also know that a stable, responsive environment is essential for children to develop the foundations of resilience and good, lifelong emotional, mental and physical health. (*Source: Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2022) Three Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. [link] <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes>*).

Therefore, in order for the next generation to thrive, we need to support the adults in children's lives to develop their own emotional health assets, so they can then provide responsive relationships to the children in their care. This creates healthy inter-generational patterns of relating, which benefit families,

communities and ultimately society.

- Emotional health at age 16 is a stronger predictor of mental health and life chances at age 30 than either demographic or socio-economic factors. (Source: Goodman, A., Joshi, H., Nasim, B., & Tyler, C. (2015). *Social and emotional skills in childhood and their long-term effects on adult life*. London: Institute of Education).
- Children and adults with high resilience resources are half as likely to have a diagnosable mental health condition. (Source: Hughes, K., Ford, K., Davies, A., Homolova, L., & Bellis, M. (2018). *Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harms from adverse childhood experiences: Welsh Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and Resilience Study – Report 1: Mental Illness*. Public Health Wales NHS Trust).
- High social and emotional skills at age 10 predict positive adult outcomes, including life satisfaction, wellbeing, labour market success, and good overall health. (Source: Goodman, A., Joshi, H., Nasim, B., & Tyler, C. (2015). *Social and emotional skills in childhood and their long-term effects on adult life*. London: Institute of Education).
- The most important predictor of adult life satisfaction is emotional health, both in childhood and subsequently. (Source: Layard, R., Clark, A. E., Cornaglia, F., Powdthavee, N., & Vernoit, J. (2014). *What predicts a successful life? A life-course model of well-being*. *The Economic Journal*, 124(580), F720-F738).
- Better self-regulation is strongly associated with mental wellbeing, good physical health and health behaviours,

and socio-economic and labour market outcomes.
(Source: *Feinstein, L. (2015). Social and emotional learning: Skills for life and work. Early Intervention Foundation*).

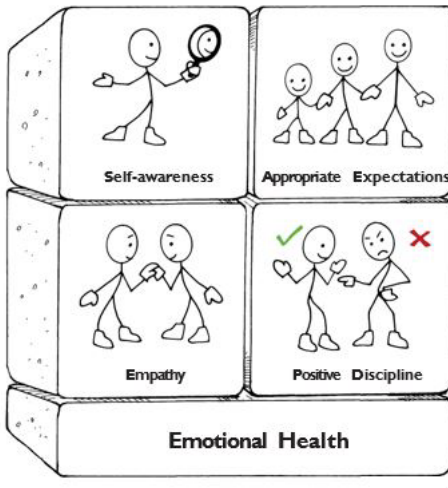
THE ETHOS BEHIND OUR PROGRAMMES

All our work is underpinned by the Nurturing Programme, which provides adults and children with the understanding, skills and ability to lead emotionally healthy lives, to build resilience, empathy and self-esteem, and to support positive relationships.

With the Nurturing Programme as their golden thread, all of our programmes focus on behaviour in the context of feelings and relationships, because we know that feelings drive behaviour.

The Four Constructs of emotional health are:

- Self-awareness
- Appropriate expectations
- Empathy
- Positive discipline



These four constructs provide the building blocks for all healthy relationships and are fundamental to good emotional health.

American child psychologist Dr Stephen J. Bavolek originally developed the Nurturing Programme based on his research into family interactions, where he identified destructive parental behaviour patterns.

The Nurturing Programme was developed to address these, and it uses the four constructs, as shown above, as the building blocks of healthy relationships: self-awareness, appropriate expectations, empathy and positive discipline.

While everyone's foundational relationship is with their parents or caregivers, the things we need in order to have healthy and fulfilling relationships are universal.

As a charity, we began with the aim of improving and enhancing family relationships by training practitioners to deliver the Nurturing Programme.

Although the four constructs were originally developed within the context of parenting, as our understanding of the importance of emotional health has grown, we have realised these constructs are the building blocks for all healthy relationships, and are therefore fundamental to good emotional health.

We also recognised the importance of children receiving consistent messaging about feelings, relationships and

behaviour at home and at school, so we developed a parallel school curriculum.

Over the years, countless parenting practitioners and school staff told us that the Nurturing Programme approach had not only transformed the relationships of their parents and pupils, but that it had improved their own personal relationships and their relationships with colleagues.

We came to realise that while everyone's foundational relationship is with their parents or caregivers, the things we need in order to have healthy and fulfilling relationships are universal. This can be a relationship between a parent and child, but it can also be between a teacher and pupil, or between a manager and employee. This is how we arrived in our present day form as Family Links the Centre for Emotional Health, a national charity whose vision is for everyone to live an emotionally healthy life.

Quote from Parenting Practitioner:

“From the time I trained I knew the Nurturing Programme was special and had everything that is needed to support and enrich the lives of families, whatever their circumstances. I have loved every aspect of delivering this programme which has been my rock, as I used the strategies and ethos to carry me through several life challenges that came my way. I know that I am a better and stronger person for having experienced this programme personally and professionally, and I will carry it with me always.”

OUR PROGRAMMES AND TRAINING COURSES

The Nurturing Programme - *for parents of children of all ages and the core of all our programmes*

This is our core parent programme which improves the emotional health of both adults and children and strengthens family relationships. Whilst this benefits parents of children of all ages, this programme works particularly well for the 3-12 years range. It works very well with parents of children with additional needs and parents in prison. An adapted version incorporating Islamic values for Muslim parents is available.

Welcome to the World - *for expectant parents from 24 weeks of pregnancy*

This our antenatal programme which focuses on the emotional health of parents and their baby, the relationships between them, attunement and bonding during the first 1,001 days.

Parenting Puzzle workshops - *for parents of children under 4 years*

This programme, which supports young children's development and school readiness, focuses on the foundations for positive, constructive relationships and calm, confident parenting.

Playful Parenting workshops - *for parents of children under 5 years*

This programme helps parents to understand the value and importance of play and its role in developing attachment.

Talking Teens - *for parents of young people 11-19 years*

This programme explores the importance of parents for teenagers and focuses on understanding teenage behaviour, communication and managing conflict.

Keeping Your Child in Mind - *for parents of children of all ages*

This is our version of what is often referred to as Reducing Parental Conflict and it focuses on relationships within the family, in particular the influence of parental relationships on children.

Further training is available to support practitioners in their work including Working One to One with Parents; Working with Families with Multiple Challenges; Parenting, Culture and Religion; Understanding Teenagers; Stress and the Brain in Children and Teenagers; Working with Muslim Families; Playful Parenting (version for those not running groups); Supervision Training and Parent Webinars.

OUR PROGRAMMES AND TRAINING COURSES

Developing Emotional Resilience - *for all school staff particularly KS1 and KS2*

This training looks at practical strategies for developing emotional health, for adults and children. It includes creating an emotionally healthy culture, boundaries and consistency, praise and criticism and managing difficult feelings.

Understanding Teenagers in School - *for all staff in secondary schools*

This training explores the latest understanding of adolescent brain development, how to promote emotional resilience, and consideration of what young people need from the adults around them.

Mental and emotional Health in Schools: Effective Strategies and Support - *for all staff in schools*

This free online course helps school staff recognise and respond to signs of poor mental health and support their own and others' emotional health, increasing mental wellbeing in schools.

Supporting Emotional Health at Work - *for workplace teams*

This training explores the whole area of emotional health - what it is and how it relates to mental health. It helps to develop a greater understanding of the importance of emotional health

and equips workplace teams with new skills and strategies to enhance their own and each other's emotional health.

THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

We work with many local authorities. These two case studies demonstrate the impact of our programmes. You can also read about more of our work on our website.

Manchester City Council Early Help Parenting Team

The Early Help Parenting Team is based within Manchester's Early Help Hubs. In addition to our usual pre- and post-group measures, the team in Manchester collects follow-up data 3 months after parents have completed the 10-week Nurturing Programme. This has allowed us to assess whether any improvements in parental mental wellbeing and children's behavioural and emotional difficulties are sustained in the longer term.

We evaluated data from 16 parent groups held over an 11-month period and found statistically significant improvements both at the end of the group, and at the 3 month follow-up, supporting the long-term outcomes in our Theory of Change.

Before the group, 37% of parents had a wellbeing score above the British norm. Afterwards, this increased to 73%. At the 3 month follow-up, 68% of the parents still had a mental wellbeing score above the British norm, showing a sustained improvement compared to baseline scores.

Before the group, 49% of children were identified as having clinical levels of behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Afterwards this decreased to 35%. At the 3 month follow-up, 30% of children were identified as having clinical levels of behavioural and emotional difficulties. This showed a sustained improvement to baseline scores.

Quote from Diane Gray–Stephenson, Senior Parenting Practitioner Early Help Parenting Team, Manchester City Council:

“What we like most about using the Nurturing Programme approach with families is that it takes such a relational approach. It’s a joy for our workers to use and the parents get so much out of it right from week one.”

Buckinghamshire Council Family Support Service

This service co-ordinates Early Help Support across Buckinghamshire, covering universal support through to targeted level 3 work, and we have trained their staff in five of our programmes. To evaluate this cross-service training, we administered pre and post-training surveys in addition to following up with practitioners 3 months after the training.

- 99% of practitioners rated the training as useful or very useful.
- 80% of practitioners felt their understanding of the importance of empathy increased as a result of the training.
- 96% of practitioners said the training increased their understanding of what young people need from their parents and other adults.

3 months after the training:

- 87% of practitioners felt the training improved their ability to support parents who have issues or difficulties with their children or teenagers.
- 90% of practitioners felt the training increased their self-awareness as a practitioner.
- 91% of practitioners felt the training equipped them with more strategies and approaches to work with parents and their children or teenagers.

Quote from Jayne Foster, Family Support Services Team Manager Children's Services, Buckinghamshire Council:

"We've fully embraced the Nurturing Programme ethos in our work with families. Parents really appreciate the non-judgmental, inclusive and empowering nature of it."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US

Quote from parent:

“I came on this programme full of anger and frustration with my eldest child. I had no relationship with her. Since being on this programme I have changed as a parent, my relationship with both my children has changed we’re all very close and have a better understanding with each other, this programme has changed our lives for the better.”

Quote from parent:

“Going to this parent group has changed everything for me. Before, my two boys couldn’t be in the same room together because it would end up in WW3. But the other week we all sat on the sofa and watched a film together. I never thought that would happen ever, but it did because of me coming to this group. It’s completely changed my home life. I honestly don’t know where I’d be without this programme. I’d recommend anybody to do it.”

Quote from parent:

“The Family Links course has been a life changer. Informative, fun, and eye-opening. I have gained invaluable knowledge and tools that have all improved family life pretty much immediately... I feel empowered to be the best version of myself with the children and the ripple effect of this is vast.”

Quote from Parenting Practitioner, Barnardo’s:

"For some it has been absolutely life-changing. And for everyone it has been a very positive experience. We can't sing the praises of the Nurturing Programme and Family Links highly enough."

Quote from School Staff Member:

"If Family Links was compulsory throughout schools, I think pupils' empathy towards others, the way they spoke to each other and the way they treated each other, would improve an awful lot. I think it ought to be compulsory, it ought to be on the curriculum!"

Quote from NHS Staff Member:

"The topics covered in this training are so important for all aspects of the NHS. It reminded me that we need to stay well in order to look after others. As a result of the training I feel able to encourage my team to speak up, feel listened to and I feel more empowered to help."

Quote from Headteacher

"My first impression of the impact of the Family Links approach was realising what it did for staff working in an environment where they were celebrated, and their emotional health was understood. It's about recognising the emotional temperature in your staff team and giving them strategies, because the strategies that you'd use with pupils aren't just unique to children; they're just unique to humans. I couldn't have done the headship without the Nurturing Programme."

As well as our work with many local authorities and multi-academy trusts, we engage, share ideas and partner with third sector and other organisations, some of whom are listed below.

Action for children

Barnado's

Fair Education Alliance

Home Start

Maternal Mental Health Alliance

National Children's Bureau

New Philanthropy Capital

Parent-Infant Foundation

PPA – Parenting Programmes' Alliance

Relationships Foundation

CONTACT US

Alison Duffy

Business Development Manager

Email: development@familylinks.org.uk

Telephone: +44(0)1865 401800

Visit our website at [link]: www.familylinks.org.uk for more information and to subscribe to our newsletter You can also connect with us on social media:

Facebook.com/FamilyLinksUK

Twitter - @FamilyLinksUK

Instagram - @familylinksuk

Youtube.com/familylinksuk

Linkedin.com/company/2839229

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We know that everyone needs good emotional health for themselves as individuals and also to enable them to contribute to creating an emotionally healthy culture wherever they are. We would like to see every adult enjoying positive relationships so that everyone can both contribute to and benefit from being in emotionally healthy families, communities, schools and workplaces.