



Rural Health and Research Congress #RHRC2019

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Community-wide practice: teaching relationship skills to build the emotional intelligence and resilience of rural and remote families

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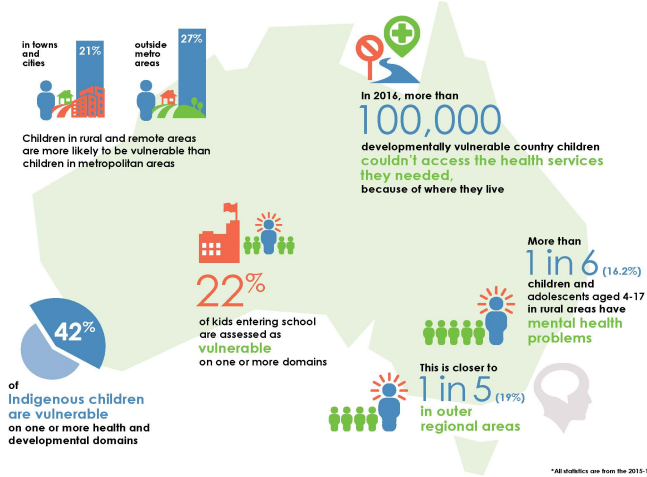
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- What we do and why
- How we chose and adapted our parenting group as a specific intervention to address our population
- The research linking Emotional Intelligence and resilience with improved developmental outcomes
- A brief over view of parenting group Tuning Into Kids ®
- Key messages to build Emotional Intelligence (EI) for you today
- What can you do differently in your workplace to promote and build EI for your clients?

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The Invisible Children



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About Royal Far West

Sydney-based NGO dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of children and families in rural and remote Australia.

"We go where the gaps are" - working closely with community and local providers.

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Client Care Team at Royal Far West

- 7 Social Workers and 2 Care Coordinators and an Intake Officer
- Provide case referral, education, and support for parents/carers attending Royal Far West (RFW) for their child's developmental, behavioural, and mental health challenges
- Transgenerational patterns of poor relationships often created parents and carers struggling to emotionally connect
- High levels of family stress and depression and anxiety in carers
- Common to have parents and carers complaining they had no 'emotional capacity'



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What do our families need? What does our team need?

- Evidence based
- Systems perspective
- Adaptable
- Flexible
- Relationships
- Trauma informed
- Professional development
- Resilience building
- Upskills all clinicians



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What is Tuning into Kids® Program?

- **What is it?**
 - Tuning in to Kids is an evidence based parenting program that focuses on the emotional connection between parents and children.
 - In particular the program teaches parents skills in Emotion Coaching, which is to recognise, understand and respond to children's emotions in an accepting and supportive way. This approach helps the child to understand and manage their emotions.
- **Why do it?**
 - Research shows that when parents are emotionally attuned to their children, the children are more likely to do well academically, socially and emotionally, with fewer behaviour problems.



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Childhood exposure to toxic stress and adult disease;

“There is a broadly acknowledged link between toxic levels of stress and child developmental outcomes”

“Many adult diseases should be viewed as developmental disorders that begin early in life and that could be reduced by the alleviation of toxic stress in childhood”

Shonkoff J.P., Garner A.S., (2012)



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Family functioning and developmental outcomes;

“The beneficial effects of a warm and nurturing family environment on a range of child developmental outcomes are unchallenged”

Hopkins, K.D., Shepherd C.J., Taylor, C.L., Zubrick, S.R. (2015)

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Emotional intelligence and improved teen mental health outcomes;

“Reduced emotion dismissing in parents is consistent with existing evidence.....and has been associated with better emotional and mental health outcomes in young people”

Havighurst, D. S., Kehoe, C. E., & Harley, A. E. (2015).

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Emotion coaching and improved health outcomes;

"Families who use an emotion coaching approach benefit from better health outcomes"

Gottman J. M., Katz, L.F., & Hooven, C. (1997)

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Tuning into Kids® program;

- **Emotionally Intelligent parenting to raise Emotionally Intelligent children.**
 - Child and adolescent development
 - How children's brains develop and function
 - Parenting styles, and what influences our parenting
 - Meta emotion- how we think and feel about different emotions
 - The steps of emotion coaching, including how to be an emotion detective, emotion talk time, empathy and descriptive praise
 - The challenges of Emotion Coaching- including when not to.
 - The importance of regulation for BOTH children and their carers
 - Parent self care- tune in to yourself first.

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5 steps of Emotion Coaching

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1. Become aware of emotions- yours and the child's, especially lower intensity emotions
2. View their emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
3. Communicate your understanding and acceptance of the emotion
4. Help them use the words to describe what they feel
5. If necessary, set limits and assist to problem solve



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Five Steps of Emotion Coaching

Dr. John Gottman

STEP 4: Communicate empathy and understanding.

STEP 2: Recognize emotion as an opportunity for connection or teaching.

STEP 5: Set limits and problem solve.

STEP 3: Help your child verbally label emotions.

STEP 1: Be aware of your child's emotions.

The Gottman Institute

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Emotion coaching in a kids movie

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**"Yes, I think I have good people skills.
What kind of idiot question is that?"**



GLASBERGEN

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Carer feedback;

Creating more supportive parent communities;

- "It would be nice to have an online group to stay in touch with each other"
- "Talking with other parents, expressing ideas, learning how to get in touch with my emotions before dealing with the kids emotions was amazing"
- "Learning how to emotionally guide and help myself and my family in a positive way was great"

Building increased awareness of our own impact on others (emotional intelligence!);

- "Understanding the importance of regulation and self care"
- "Taking the time to stop and think before reacting"
- "Realising anger is an emotion and all emotions are ok- this was a breakthrough for me!"
- "Becoming more aware of small changes that I can make that will bring positive change"
- "Being able to tune into our children and support them before they had a melt-down, not after"

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Carer feedback;

Community and family-building;

"I will use these skills in my work place as well"

"(I loved) how to emotionally guide and help myself and my family in a positive way"

"It provided me with insight into how we parent currently and an opportunity to reflect on how to change for the better in order to help my children."

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What we do to teach empathy;



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What we do to teach empathy;



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Being an emotion detective;

- *Starting preschool for the first time*
- *Being told to share your special toy*
- *Birth of a sibling*
- *Thinking there are monsters in the dark*
- *First time of leaving your home town of 500 people to travel to Sydney*
- *Being told you will miss the Sailing activity because you have to attend a Psychiatry assessment*

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Meta-emotion;

- *What are the cultural messages about emotions that we operate under without question?*
 - *-from our churches, our mentors, our schools?*
 - *-how does this impact relationships?*
 - *-parenting?*
 - *-social interactions?*



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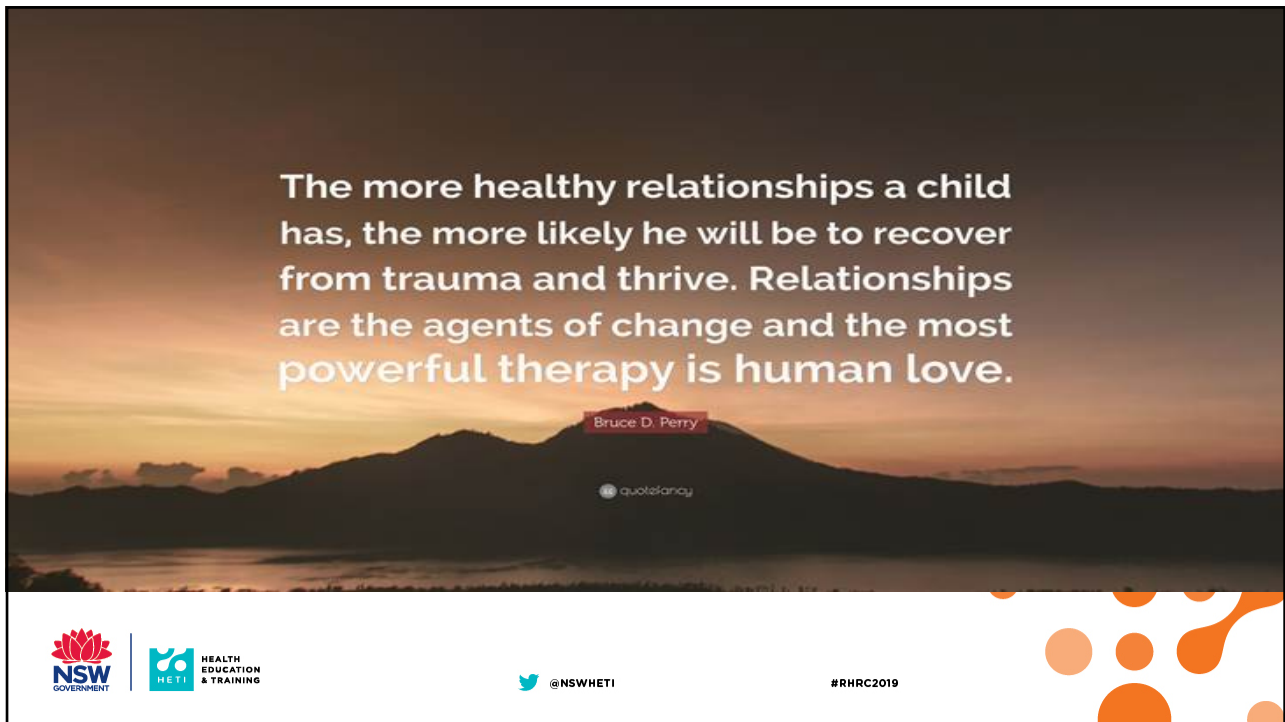
Building EI and resilience locally;

- *How can you share the importance of building emotional intelligence with your clients and your colleagues?*



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The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

Bruce D. Perry

@quotefancy

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