

Worksheet 5.2 : The Steps to Becoming an Emotion Coach (Attend, Label, Validate, Regulate/ Soothe, - ALVS)

Step 1: Attend

Look and listen for signs of negative and positive emotions.

"I see that something is up. I notice that when I said you wouldn't be allowed to go on the school trip you started picking the skin on your thumb"

Why attend? Because I care about you very much and I notice your distress

I wonder if my saying 'I just want you to be happy' makes you feel as though you are not allowed to be upset.

Step 2: Label

Guess the emotion and encourage Edi to voice the difficulty.

"You seem sad. Would you like to talk about it?"

Why Label? *I want to come alongside you and understand you, and where you are. I can cope with hearing about your sadness because I love you.*

Step 3: Validate

Why validate? This is the most important and yet the most challenging of all of the steps of emotion coaching. Anything can be validated and this process communicates a great deal of empathy.

Use of the word **"because"** is very powerful in the validation process:

"I can understand you might be feeling sad right now because your ED is restricting your options."

"I know you were looking forward to going on that trip and you are unable to because the consultant feels your weight is too low"

"I might feel sad if I had a disappointment like that because of an illness that I didn't want or choose to have"

Step 4. Soothe

When meeting the emotional need, it is important to refer back to the basics of emotions. Each emotion has a corresponding need from the environment. For example:

Sadness: *soothing, giving a hug*

Anger: *allowing Edi space to calm, empathy, helping to set and defend boundaries*

Fear: *protecting from danger (this does not mean protecting against anxiety! A real danger must be involved such as very high medical risk)*

Anxiety: *helping to confront the anxiety-provoking situation with love and support*

Shame: *soothe reassuring Edi of your unconditional love, giving a hug, explaining it takes courage to feel responsible for own actions*

Why soothe? I am here for you whatever happens and I love you unconditionally