

SUPPORTING THE EMOTIONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

A talk by Caroline Southerden, Integrative Psychotherapist.



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Experiences of Mental Health in Young People

Mental Health is defined as a 'combination of abnormal thoughts, emotions, behaviours and relationships with others'



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Some statistics



- 1 in 9 nine children aged 5-15 has a clinically diagnosable mental health problem
- 50% of mental ill health has started by the age of 15 and 75% has developed by the age of 18
- ChildLine counselling about suicidal thoughts and feelings reached the highest ever recorded levels in 2017/2018
- 18,778 children and young people were admitted to hospital for self-harm in England and Wales in 2015/16 – a rise of 14% in one year
- Only 1 in 4 young people with mental ill health asks for help – this is due to worries about stigma, not knowing where to go or how to access help and/or distrusting the support that is on offer
- Young people are 10x more likely to access mental-health services within their school when compared to a non-school based service (because it is easily accessible and parents don't need to go with them).



Are Mental Health Disorders on the rise?



- According to a MIND 2017 report, the overall total number of people with reported mental health problems has not significantly risen in recent years. However, figures do not account for:
 - Those in prisons, sheltered housing, hospitals or the homeless
 - Those who do not report their experiences to an agency, suffer in silence or do not receive treatment
 - Those who seek private counselling or alternate therapies
- Incidents of reported mental health issues in young people aged 5-19 has however risen by 8.1% since 2004
- Reduced funding for mental health services (meaning increased waiting times and less access to treatment) may have impacted the way people cope with mental health issues:
 - Suicide rates have risen by 11.8% in 10-24 year olds
 - Self-Harm rates have increased to count for 6.4% of all young people (although more than 50% of young people don't report their self-harm to a medical professional).



So what can you do?

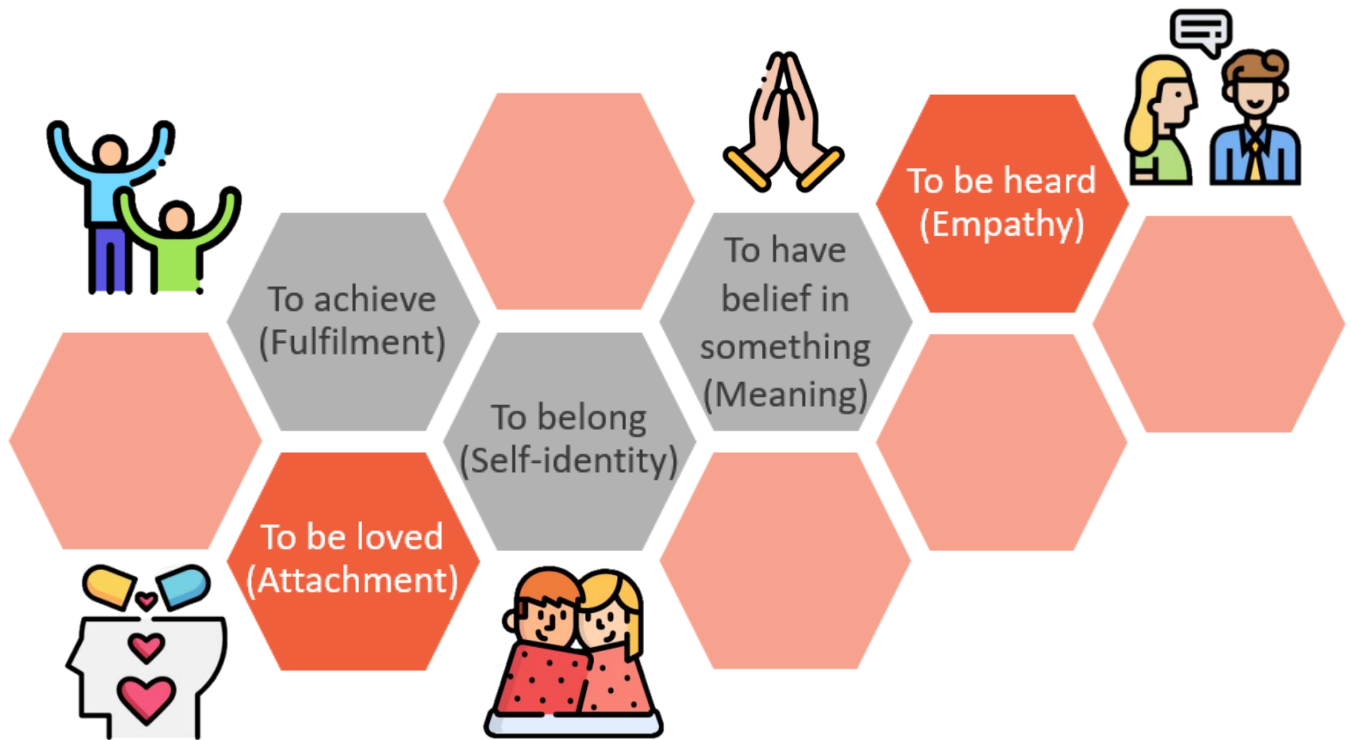


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The Five Core Psychological Needs



Having these needs met during a child's developmental years is crucial, for both the brain's development and in helping to shape the relationships they form.

Understanding these needs can help us to offer better support to the children and young people in our care.

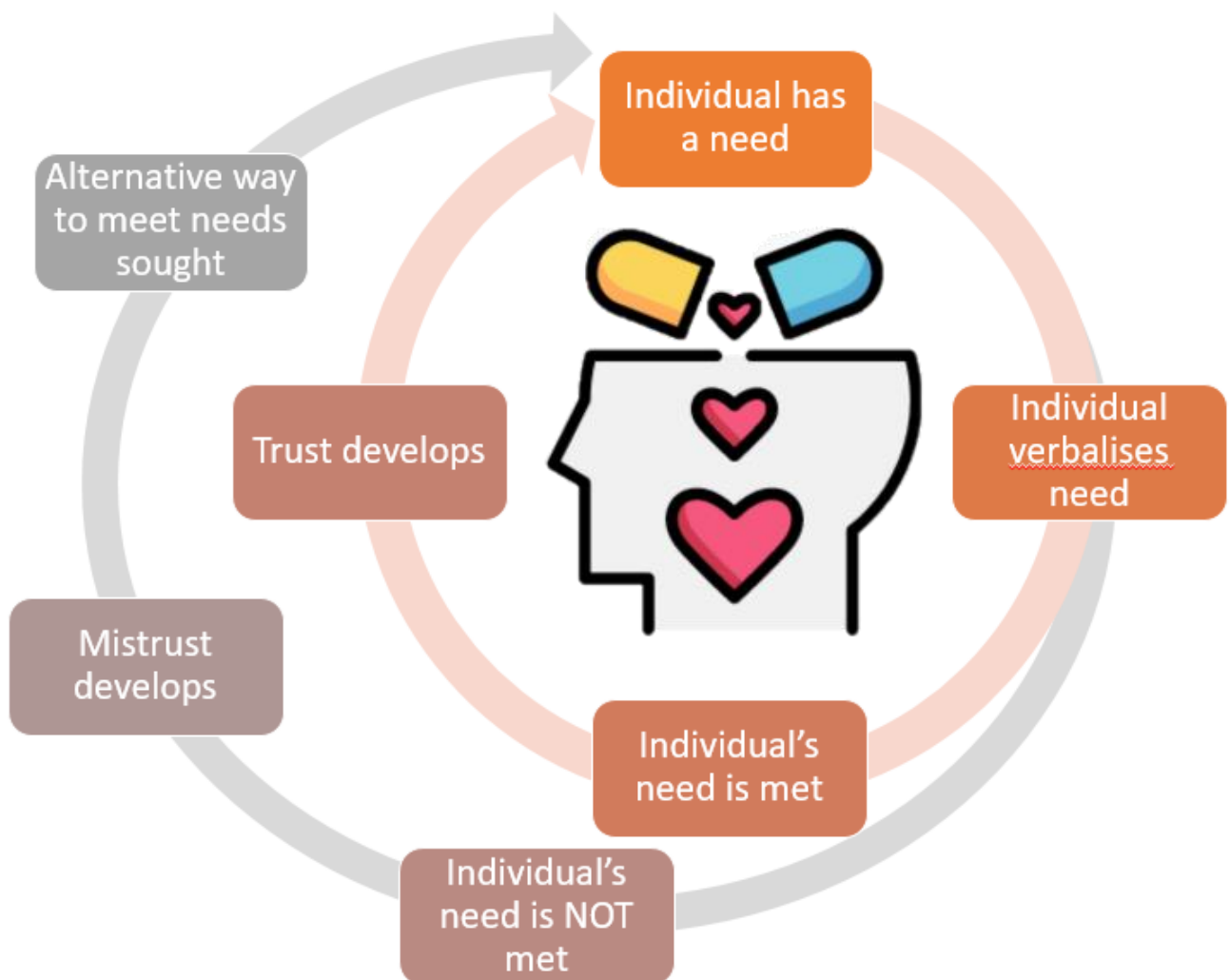
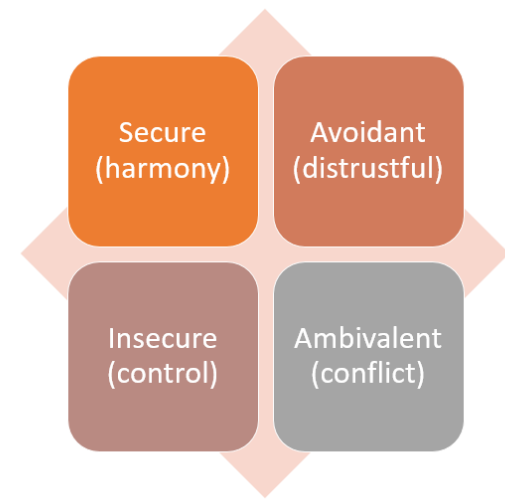
This brochure investigates 2 of these needs in more detail; **to be loved** and **to be heard**.



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To be loved - The Attachment Cycle



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Case Study

Our child is behaving in a way that we can't understand:

Mood swings

Uncommunicative / withdrawn

Teary / Angry

Obstructive

Nervous / Fidgety

Risky Behaviours



Child's projection of self, achieves the illusion that their feelings of powerlessness can be controlled

Child projects their behaviour onto us to discharge and communicate their internal fears and needs

We may feel completely powerless, stuck and out of our depth

We may remain unaware of our personal issues and ignore what our child is trying to communicate

To relieve our overwhelming sense of powerlessness, we may compensate by 'acting out' our own early experiences – this reinforces our child's self-belief and confirms their view of the world

Dealing with Intense Feelings – An ineffective and static approach

Adapted from 'You Think I'm Evil' by David Taransaud. Published Worth Publishing Ltd 2010. ISBN 1-903269-16-4



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Not meeting our children's needs

'The way we talk to our kids becomes their inner voice'

Peggy O'Mara



Role	The Enforcer	The Ignorer	The Surrenderer	The Rescuer
Behaviour	We dictate or punish and adopt an aggressive and dominating attitude	We stop listening and shut down the part of us that cares	We submit to demands	We rescue with help, advice and solutions when they haven't been asked for
Perception	We are seen as overbearing dictatorial authority figures to whom the child has to surrender	We are seen as heartless and self-absorbed adults, neglectful of the child's needs	We are seen as too weak to deal with the child's concerns	We are seen as powerful and might authority figures
Reinforce	We reinforce the belief that the world is populated by merciless people, reinforcing the idea that power and control are essential for survival	We confirm the belief that the child's sense of self is worthless and undeserving of our attention	Our attitude shifts the balance of power and confirms the belief that there is nobody out there to help with the inner chaos	We reinforce the child's own sense of powerlessness and confirm the need for alternate roles to be adopted as an essential survival strategy

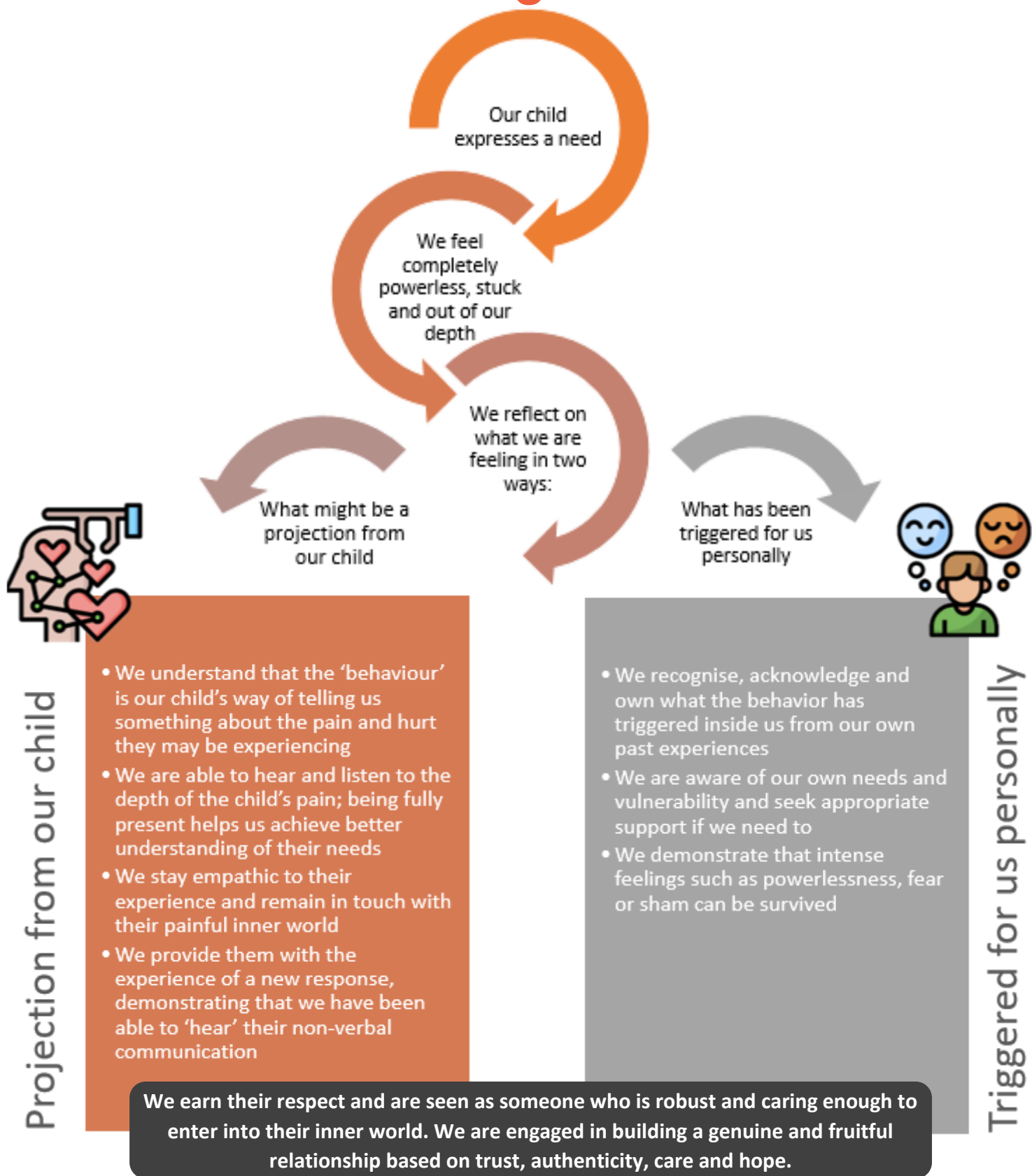
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Meeting needs



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Key needs for Secure Attachment

- **ATTUNEMENT** – notice, match and monitor your child’s emotional state, be attuned to signals regarding their needs and respond in kind
- **CONTAINMENT** – stay focussed on your child’s emotional state without becoming involved in your ‘own story’, be strong enough to bear their pain, ensure safe boundaries and structures
- **EMOTIONAL REGULATION** – soothe and calm emotional behaviours in an age appropriate manner
- **EMPATHY** – affirm, understand and recognise what your child is feeling even when different to your own experiences.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GrGR68LJF8>



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Secure Attachment builds Resilience

Resilience:

- Increases a child's ability **to cope** with adversity and frustration
- Enables a child **to persist** when faced with challenges and cope with failure
- Equips children **to try** new challenges
- Supports chasing after **dreams** and building **aspirations**
- Supports a **growth mind set** and **adaptive coping** and **problem solving skills**
- Enhances **empathy, compassion and self-acceptance**
- Reduces chances of mental ill health.



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To be heard - The power of Empathy



Authenticity
Soul Relationship
HEAR
Emotion Understand
Compassionate
Interpersonal
Communication
Self-Empathy
Compassion
Communion
Empathic
Alive
Heart
Mutual Awareness
Hearing
Speak
Request
Giving
Dialogue
Insight
EMPATHY
Presence
I Hear You
Meeting
CONNECT
Needs
Present
Warmth
Consciousness
Listening
Safety
Feelings
Emotional
Responsive



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Understanding young people's brains

Pros of the adolescent brain

- Creative
- Brave
- Curious
- Hungry to learn
- Open to experiences
- Risk takers
- Self-centred (live in the moment)
- Adventurous



Cons of the adolescent brain

- Inability to multi-task
- Limited problem solving skills
- Limited attention span
- Peer centred
- Unbalanced decision making
- Limited risk analysis
- Lack of empathy
- Limited organisational skills

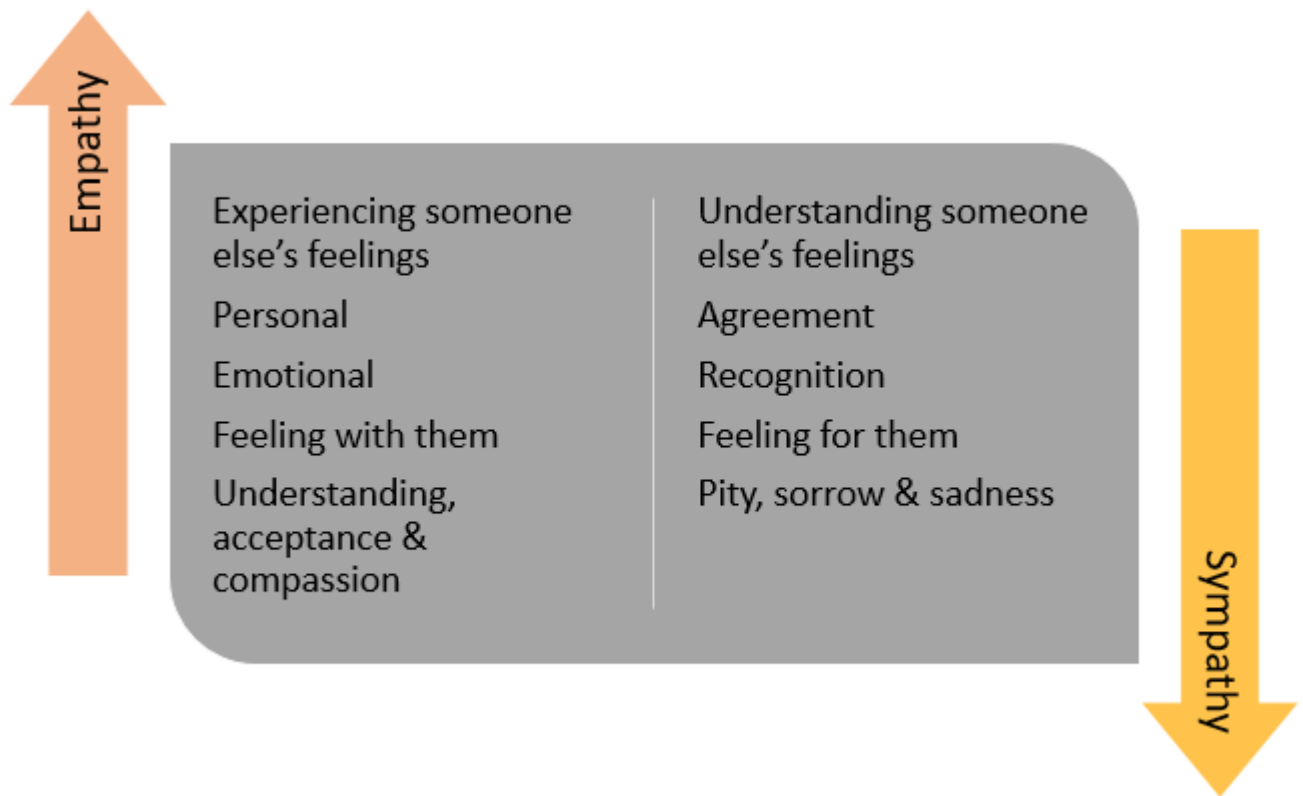
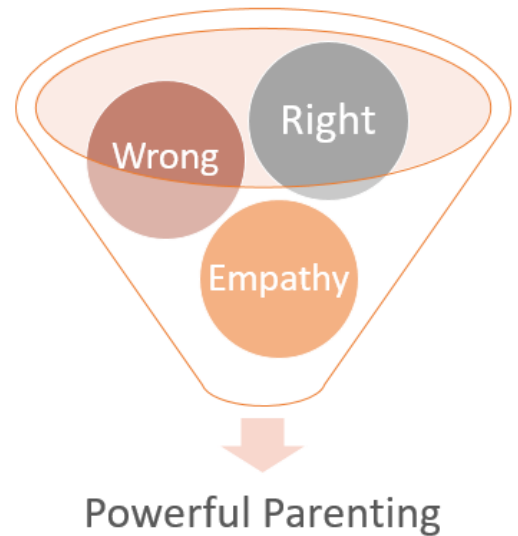
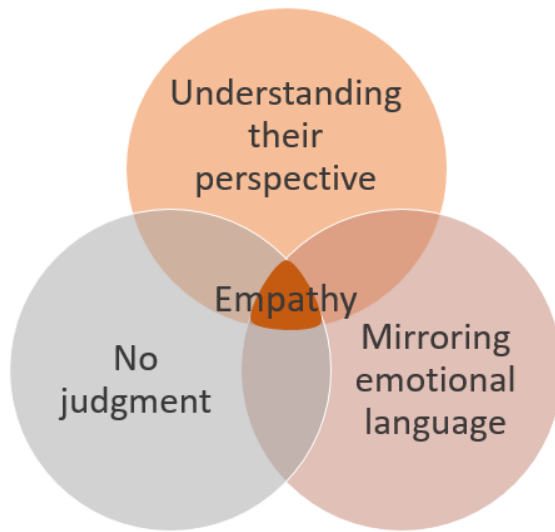
- Brain development continues until we are in our twenties
- Adolescents process information through the Amygdalae, which is linked to emotions and memories
- Adults process information through the Pre-Frontal Cortex, which is linked to logic, planning and organisation
- The Pre-Frontal Cortex is the last part of the brain to develop.



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Empathy is key



‘Empathy is walking a mile in somebody else’s moccasins. Sympathy is being sorry their feet hurt.’

Rebecca O'Donnell



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To be heard - The power of Empathy



Imagine you've had a hard day at work. Your boss has asked you to do some extra work, but due to your heavy workload you didn't manage to get it done. Rather than listen to you, your boss yells at you in front of everyone.

Possible responses from a friend might include:

- **Denial of feelings** – 'you're blowing the whole thing out of proportion, you're just tired'
- **Philosophical** – 'that's life, take it on the chin'
- **Advice** – 'you know what you should do....'
- **Questions** – 'surely you had time, didn't you know he'd be angry?'
- **Defence of the other person** – 'your boss must be under so much pressure...'
- **Pity** – 'you poor thing, I feel so embarrassed for you'
- **Amateur psychoanalysis** – 'do you think you're only really upset because he reminds you of...'
- **Empathic** – 'wow, that sounds rough. To be attacked like that in front of everyone, after such a full on day; that must have been really hard to take'.

Excerpt taken from 'How to Talk so kids will Listen and Listen so kids will Talk' by Adele Faber.
Published by Piccadilly Press 2012. ISBN 1848123094



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Improving communication

Learn your child's communication style:

- 🌀 **Visual** – descriptive
- 🌀 **Auditory** – sounds and words
- 🌀 **Kinaesthetic** – actions and feelings



Benefits

- 🌀 Improves communications
- 🌀 Enhances attachment
- 🌀 Increases empathy levels
- 🌀 Maximises learning
- 🌀 Enhances engagement in topics
- 🌀 Improves sensory development of ALL areas

Excerpt taken from 'Flying Start: Coaching your children for life' by Emma Sargent.
Published by Cyan Books and Marshall Cavendish 2006. ISBN 1904879675



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Understand their LOVE language



There are five LOVE languages

- **Physical touch** – hugs, kisses, high fives, a pat on the back, holding hands
- **Affirmations** – positives and specific words of praise
- **Gifts** – thoughtful gifts or surprises that show someone has thought about them
- **Acts of Service** – having nice things done for them without asking, helping with projects, taking them to places
- **Quality Time** – watching movies, going for walks, playing games, time spent together.

Discovering languages

- Observe how your child expresses love, what words/actions do they use
- Listen to what they ask for – time together, hugs etc.
- Notice what they most complain about
- Help your child choose between options and notice their response i.e. watching a movie or helping with their DT project

Excerpt taken from 'The 5 Love Languages of Children' by Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell
Published by Moody Publishers 2016. ISBN 0802412858



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Communication Tools



Time

- 7 minutes
- Put down what you are doing
- Look them in the eye and give them your full attention



Autonomy

- Ask what is needed
- Allow choices to be made and encourage problem solving
- Work with them to seek the support THEY need



Praise

- Be specific
- Give attention to detail
- Do not Judge
- Encourage Hopes and Dreams



Listen

- Listen to their words and body language
- Pay attention to what they may NOT be saying
- Respect THEIR experience

Receiving empathic support creates new synaptic connections in the brain in less than 7 minutes, changing the genetic structure of the body's response.



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