

Episode 15 - RTT Series – Processing Feelings

This episode explores various techniques for helping children process their feelings and develop emotional regulation skills. The episode begins with a recap of previous discussions on physiological coregulation and processing aimed at helping kids become cognitively centered. The focus then shifts to processing feelings, which can be more difficult, because emotions are challenging for children to articulate.

Check-in's are a basic tool for helping kids express their emotions. These check-in's involve asking children about their current emotional state. It often times is a good practice to focus on basic needs like hunger, thirst, and fatigue as potential sources of emotional distress. Helping children monitor these needs is also developing their executive skill of self-monitoring.

The episode also introduces two valuable tools: the Emotional Intensity Thermometer and the Feelings Map. The Emotional Intensity Thermometer is used to assess and rate the strength of different emotions, allowing children to better understand and express their feelings. The Feelings Map helps children identify and separate complex, simultaneous emotions, providing a visual aid for discussing their feelings.

Empathic Listening is presented as a powerful technique for counselors to connect with children on an emotional level. The importance of mirroring body language and tone, asking clarifying questions, and avoiding problem-solving during empathic listening sessions is emphasized.

Some cautions include anticipating the potential for disclosures of abuse or trauma during empathic listening and the importance of communicating such disclosures to the child's therapist. There is also a risk that Empathic Listening will lead a child to assume that you agree with all of their framing, including negative views of other people. Ways to address that possibility are addressed.

The episode concludes with guidance on transitioning from Empathic Listening back to structured activities and routines, highlighting the role of the counselor in providing emotional support and fostering a sense of belonging in children.

Throughout the episode, there's a focus on the development of executive skills, self-monitoring, and stress tolerance as crucial components of helping children process their feelings and achieve emotional centeredness.