



## **THE CALM CONNECTION – PARENT GROUP**



**STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS, REDUCE STRESS, AND INCREASE  
AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

## Welcome Back ... Self-Assessment

Where am I in my understanding of the meaning of **Connect and Reflect** interactions.



How am I doing in practicing my **Connect and Reflect** interactions.



How did the Homework go?

Anyone want to share or reflect from the questions provided last week or your experiences with Connect and Reflect with your child?

The questions were:

- How do you and your child experience joy together?
- What might prevent you from experiencing joy and using connect and reflect interactions with your child?

Allow conversation.

Do assessment of practicing Connect and Reflect.

# Session Two

## Understanding Emotions

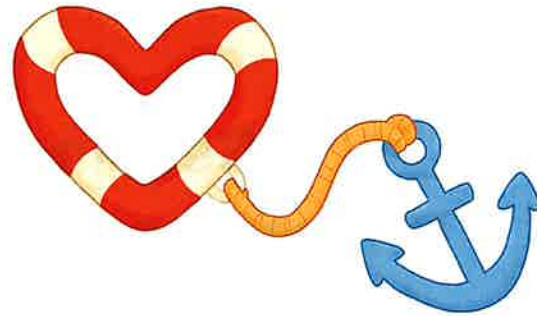


The CALM Connection Group Session 2 Understanding Emotions



This week we are going to be learning about how a child defines love through a space of emotional safety in learning about understanding emotions.

## Space Of Safety



This week we are going to be learning about how a child defines love through a space of emotional safety in learning about understanding emotions.



# Understanding Emotions



Creating a space of emotional safety may sound complex. Many caregivers seem to be able to navigate physical safety needs with their children (most of the time- sometimes our kids are just way too fast).

However emotional needs can be harder to understand especially if we ourselves have a hard time understanding our own emotional needs or if this SOS need was not met for us in safe and responsive way when we were younger...maybe even now.

## The Gift of the No Blame Zone...



Before we get started, we will always go over this slide and once again giving all of us the gift of the **no blame zone**.

As we continue to learn new information there may be times that you may have feelings of guilt. It is important to remember that these feelings are normal.

We need to remember that there is no such thing as perfect parenting. As parents we do the best we can with the information we know, we are human, and we will make mistakes. The gift of the no blame zone helps us from feeling shame or blame for the practices we do.

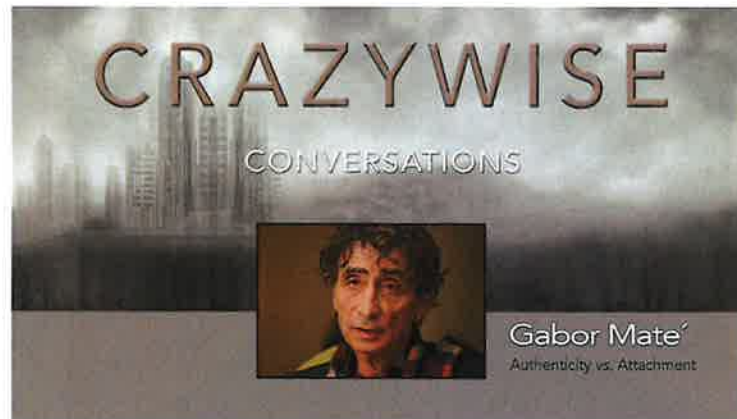
## The Gift of the No Blame Zone...



Keeping in mind, it is only when we know different, we can do different, and forgiving ourselves for the mistakes we have made and will continue to make.

Also understanding that research states, that if you can use the strategies that you will be learning (some of you are already doing) 30% of the time, it is enough to make connections with the neural pathways of your child's brain to foster healthy brain architecture.

## Authenticity and Attachment



The CALM Connection Group Session 2 Understanding Emotions



Let's watch this powerful video from Gabor Mate, a very prominent doctor from Vancouver BC who helps us understand why it is so important to allow our children to express their emotions and show us how they authentically feel.



# How many of you suppress your authentic emotions.



A tough video to watch, probably because many of us have experienced this growing up and are following some of the same patterns, just like Dr. Gabor Mate did with his kids...no shame, no blame.

As Dr. Mate suggests, this is often in our subconscious brains and is embedded in our reactions due to the history of our experiences...so how do we change this and develop new patterns so that our children are not feeling like they need to fake their emotions to maintain connections and attachment with us big people?

Let's relook at Daniel Goleman's work around emotional intelligence to understand what it means to be more emotionally self-aware of our authentic emotions before we transfer this understanding to our children's emotions.

## Understanding Emotions

Emotional awareness means, “the ability to recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts and values and how these influence behaviour.” (CASEL).



Let’s understand the meaning of emotional self-awareness.

In Daniel Goleman’s work around building emotional intelligence (from our first session), having self-awareness is a foundational first component.

Basically, **self-awareness** is defined by CASEL (which stands for the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning and is a leading organization that provides research in understanding that social and emotional development as fundamental for children’s learning from early years to beyond) as,

## Self-Awareness



How good are you at identifying your own emotions?



It seems simple to be aware of our own emotions, but truly, how many of you are authentically aware of what you are feeling, and can you articulate these emotions when you need to?

Let's explore the emotion and feeling of jealousy.

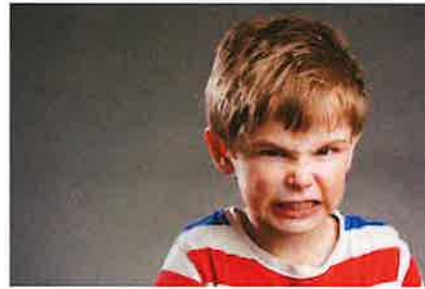
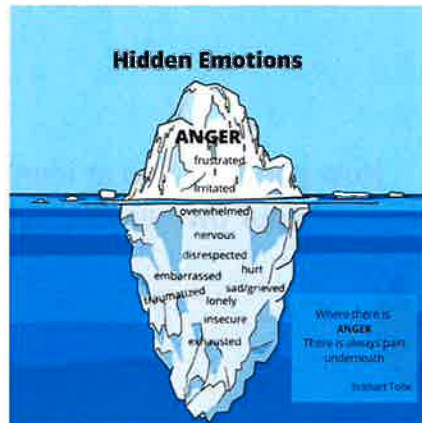
How many of you feel comfortable letting others know that you are jealous?

For example,

Letting someone know that you are jealous because they got the promotion, and you didn't.

Perhaps you replace jealousy with a secondary emotion such as anger.

## Self-Awareness



As we begin our understanding of emotions, I am using the terminology “primary emotions” and “secondary emotions”.

A secondary emotion is used many times to protect ourselves from an emotion we may not think is acceptable or makes us feel vulnerable. They can happen quickly and hijack our other emotions.

A primary emotion(s) is or are the emotions that we felt right before the secondary emotion; however, we are not immediately aware of it, or we may be hiding it. Many of our children haven’t learned them or how to express them yet. So, they become used to using their secondary emotion.

As per the promotion example, perhaps you may exhibit the emotion of anger to hide primary emotions of jealousy, sadness and disappointment.

How many of our children might use secondary emotions because they don’t know how to express their primary emotions, or they are confused about their primary emotions?

## Self-Awareness



For example, how many children are told that they need to love their younger sibling or share with their younger sibling, and the child might be sad or jealous because they don't have Mom and Dad's full attention anymore and they show anger towards their sibling?

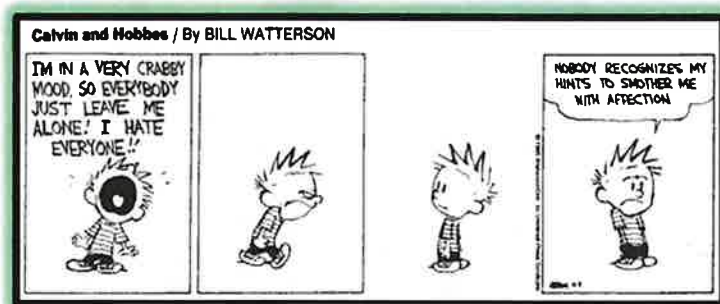
*Pause.....This happens to adults to...*

***My example of Jealousy:*** *My daughter got into the car after spending some time with her friend and her friend's Mom and said "Alex's mom is so funny. I had so much fun with her!"*

*My first response in my head is, "Really, I make your dinner, wash your clothes, take you places AND I'm funny too." I reflected quickly and I knew I was feeling jealous, so I quickly shifted too... "Wow, I'm so glad you had fun spending time with Alex and her Mom."*

***What is your example?***

## Understanding and Expressing our Feelings



As a result, it can be complicated knowing what our children are really feeling.

Here is a great example of Calvin not being able to express his emotions to have others understand exactly what he needs.

### ***Explain the Calvin cartoon.....***

First, he is yelling that he hates everyone....

then he storms away, and appears to be angry, with fists clenched tight..

then he looks back with what appears to be concern..... and

finally, he appears sad saying “Nobody recognizes my hints to smother me with affection.”

***Facilitator Question:*** Did you know that he needed a hug from the first picture?

Notice I said “needed”? Behaviour is always based on an unmet need, and it is up to us big people to try and figure out what that unmet need is.

We will be exploring this throughout the course of this program.



Daniel Goleman emphasizes the importance of fostering the development of self-awareness so that your child can be supported with managing their feelings.



As mentioned before Daniel Goleman, a leader in understanding emotional intelligence helps us understand why this is important.

He emphasizes that the development of self-awareness is foundational for our children to understand, so they can learn to express their vulnerable emotions and as big people we can better support these complex feelings.

**We need to start giving children the language to say how they feel...**

## Name it, to Tame it



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Labelling emotions normalizes your child's feelings.



If we can support our children to name some of their emotions, they can become more reflective in understanding how this all connects with their thoughts and feelings. Dan Seigel, refers to this as “Name it, to Tame it.”

Once again, this is foundational for your child to learn first and once they can identify and label their emotions, they can start to make connections to their thoughts and feelings to help manage some of their bigger and more passionate and vulnerable emotions.



# How can we teach our children the skill of becoming more self-aware of their emotions?



Now that we are understanding the importance of having emotional self-awareness.....

**Facilitator Question:** How can we foster this skill and awareness for our children?

Invite parents to respond and validate their comments.

**Possible Answers:**

- *Modelling*
- *Reading books together*
- *Watching favourite shows together*
- *Singing together*
- *Playing together*

Let's talk more about this in a few minutes.

## Understanding Emotions



Using everyday moments to label some of the emotions you may think they are feeling, e.g.



“You looked frustrated when your sister took your train.”



There are many ways, as already mentioned, that we can support our children’s development of emotional self-awareness.

One of the best ways to do this is taking everyday moments to label some of the emotions you may think your child is feeling. For example, if your child appears to have a sad face, you may say, **“I am wondering if you are feeling sad when your sister is playing with a toy you want”**... or if you are unsure about the feeling...

You may just want to state... **“It is really hard for you when you are trying to wait.”**

If your child looks angry, try not to label, “you look angry.” Remember this is a secondary emotion, and you want to label your child’s primary emotions. Think about how it feels for you if someone says, “you look angry,” rather than, “it seems like that really hurt you.” Many of us would probably respond better to someone’s attempt at identifying our primary emotions.

We will learn more about these type of responses next week, when we look at self-management and supporting our children’s big passionate emotions.

## Understanding Emotions

Remember to always only label what you think your child is feeling and try to include the incident... For example,

“I wonder if you are feeling (Label emotion) when (label event)”



### Read slide

By doing this we can label the emotion and make the connection for our children on how they relate.

**Remember** label the child's emotions and  
**not blaming** the child for yours/others' emotions.



When clarifying, we never want to blame our child for how they make us feel or how they make another child feel. It can become very easy to blame, when we ourselves are not managing our emotions well.

It is important to try NOT to say things like:

“You make me feel angry when.....”

“You make her sad when you.....”

**BLAMING = SHAMING** and shame is a very hard and complex emotion to recover from even as adults.

Let's look at this next video from Brene Brown who helps us see that we can do this very quickly.



*Watch the Video: Blame*

**Facilitator Question:** Anyone in this room a blamer?

I know that as I have become more aware of this, I have been able to take more accountability for how I am feeling. I do invite you to become more aware of this too....

It is very easy to do in moments where we are struggling to self-manage.

**For example:** Stubbing your toe on a child's toy..... Your blaming thought might be.....How many times have I told you to put away your toys?

**My example.....**

*I was late leaving home for work and then was driving behind someone following the speed limit. I started to blame them for making me late until I realized that I needed to take accountability.*

**Your example.....**

## Understanding Emotions



Another way we take everyday moments into building emotional self-awareness is labelling what other's might be feeling.

For example, if you and your child are at the playground on a play date and Sam is sad because he wanted to go first down the slide.....

You may want to label what emotion Sam may be feeling to your child.....

**“Sam looked sad when he didn’t get to go first.”**

Notice that the emotions and event were labelled here too.

You can also increase your child’s self-awareness by providing examples of how you may have experienced the same emotion. For example,

**“I feel sad too when the last pair of size 9 boots are sold out”**

By labelling that others feel sad and that we as big people feel this emotion too, we are normalizing the emotion for our children.

## Understanding Emotions



Expand your child's  
self-awareness  
of emotions during play.

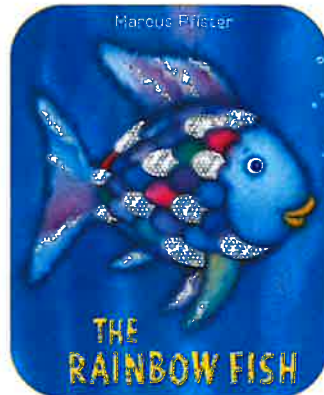


We can also expand our children's understanding of emotions by just being curious about what is happening in their play activities.

For example, as children are playing with characters, you might say

**“Your characters are fighting with each other. I am wondering what is happening?”** and then waiting to see if you can draw some emotions from your child's response.

## Understanding Emotions



Use your child's favorite books to identify feelings.



Books are an excellent way of building emotional literacy and awareness.

Using the characters in the book, you can invite your child to think about some of the emotions the characters are feeling.

For example, in the story of the Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister, you could identify some of the feelings in the story,

**“The fish seemed sad when Rainbow Fish didn’t share his shiny scales with them.”**

We know how connected children can become to characters in a story or on TV. How many of you cry or are disappointed when something happens to one of your favourite actors in a show or your novel.



## Understanding Emotions

Emotional literacy can be learned through songs, play, role modeling, literature, everyday moments.

(Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2007; Gordon, 2009)



The CALM Connection Group Session 2 Understanding Emotions



**Read Slide.** Let's talk about songs!! One of the most popular childhood songs, can be used to learn many different emotions they feel.

**Facilitator Question:** Any guesses on what song this might be? Yes! "If your happy and you know it!" In your folder there is a copy of the song that we will practice before you leave today. It is a little different than the version you may have learned.

The other significant way our children learn emotions and develop emotional intelligence is through us, how we model and express it to them.

**Facilitator Question:** How many of you express your feelings as an experience happens.....such as, "I was so sad when my coffee spilled because I was looking forward to drinking it!" Once again, we labelled the emotion and described the event.

Research suggests there is huge impact on how our children read our emotions and the impacts this has on them.

**Stress Contagion: Your Emotions Affect Your Child...**  
Are you affected by others' Emotions?



Kimberly Schonert-Reich



Eva Oberle, 2006



The CALM Connection Group Session 2 Understanding Emotions



Remember, **no shame no blame** as we review this study done by Dr. Kimberly Schonert Reichl and Dr Eva Oberle.

In this study, the researchers found a significant correlation in teachers who expressed high levels of burn out and their students stress level.

The study examined the stress cortisol of student's saliva based on teachers who reported high burn out rates through a self-assessment.

They found that these students had high cortisol levels in their saliva.

The researchers then tested the student's saliva of teachers who reported experiencing less stress and the researchers found low levels of cortisol in their saliva.

# The researchers concluded that stress was therefore contagious...



What was not known is whether the students came in with high stress and passed it on to their teachers or did the teacher come in with high stress and passed it onto the students.

Regardless, we need to know that other people's emotions impact us.

**Facilitator Question:** Can you think of an experience where someone else's emotions impacted how you were feeling?

**My example:** *I went into a preschool where I was meeting the teacher for the first time. I introduced myself and she basically directed me towards the child I was observing. No smiles, no affect on her face. I felt like I was walking on eggshells and couldn't wait to leave.*

**Your example:**



Let's watch this video and see the impact of emotions even when words are not used.

At the end of the story, we will label the emotions of the characters and see if there are some similarities.

*Watch video.*

## Let's Practice

### EXERCISE

Watch the clip Jay Story and reflect on the emotions.

Character	Feelings
The Fisherman	
The Dog	
The Bird	



**Please refer to your Family Workbook.**

**Facilitator Question:** What emotions did you notice? Take a moment to reflect with a partner the different emotions of the characters.

*Have the group provide their responses and reflections.*

As you can see our body language is far more expressive than even what we verbally communicate. According to a study done by Albert Mehrabian around communication, his theory is widely known as the 7%, 38%, 55% Rule.

This means, we make meaning of information given to us through 7% words, 38% tone of voice, and 55% body language.

This might make sense as to why we use emoji's to help make meaning in our written communication.

## Non-Verbal Communication



**Facilitator Question:** Here's another example, how many times have you asked someone "How are you today?"

They say "Fine." However, their words don't match their tone or body language.

As a result, there are many ways we try to understand how people are communicating with us and words are a small piece of understanding communication.

## Your Story



Many times, much of what we have learned about our communication and parenting style is what we know from our own experiences. We all have a story, and it is important to be aware of your story. It is important to be able to articulate this story so that it can help you understand your early life experiences and where your values and beliefs come from. Then, you will be able to explore the story that you are developing with your child.

Ultimately, the story that you want to develop with your child is one with a secure and safe connection. When children are raised in predictable, reliable and emotionally safe environments with at least one primary caregiver providing a secure connection, they will have the foundations to help them flourish in life.

## A Safe and Secure Connection



A safe and secure connection is where the child receives sensitive, attuned and responsive attention from their parent or caregiver...

Basically, meaning lots of Connect and Reflect interactions as we learned from Session 1.

As a result of these interactions, parents are able to read their children's cues, they are more present and are able to provide predictability.



## The Story Can Be Changed



If a safe and secure connection was not a part of your experience and your story, you can still learn and choose for it to be a part of your story with your child.

To do this... it is important for you to reflect on your childhood experiences and understand how these shaped your memories. When you are able to reflect your life story and make sense of how you were parented, you can better understand the impacts this has had on moulding your current relationships. It is important to be able to reflect on your past experiences (positive and negative). The goal is to be able to acknowledge your story, however, not become preoccupied with it. Therefore, providing you the reflection and self-awareness to practice a safe and secure story with your child.

You cannot change the past and often your parents did what they could based on their knowledge and experiences. You do, however, have the power to change your experiences with your child now and in the future by learning how to foster a safe and secure connection with your child.

## The Story Can Be Changed



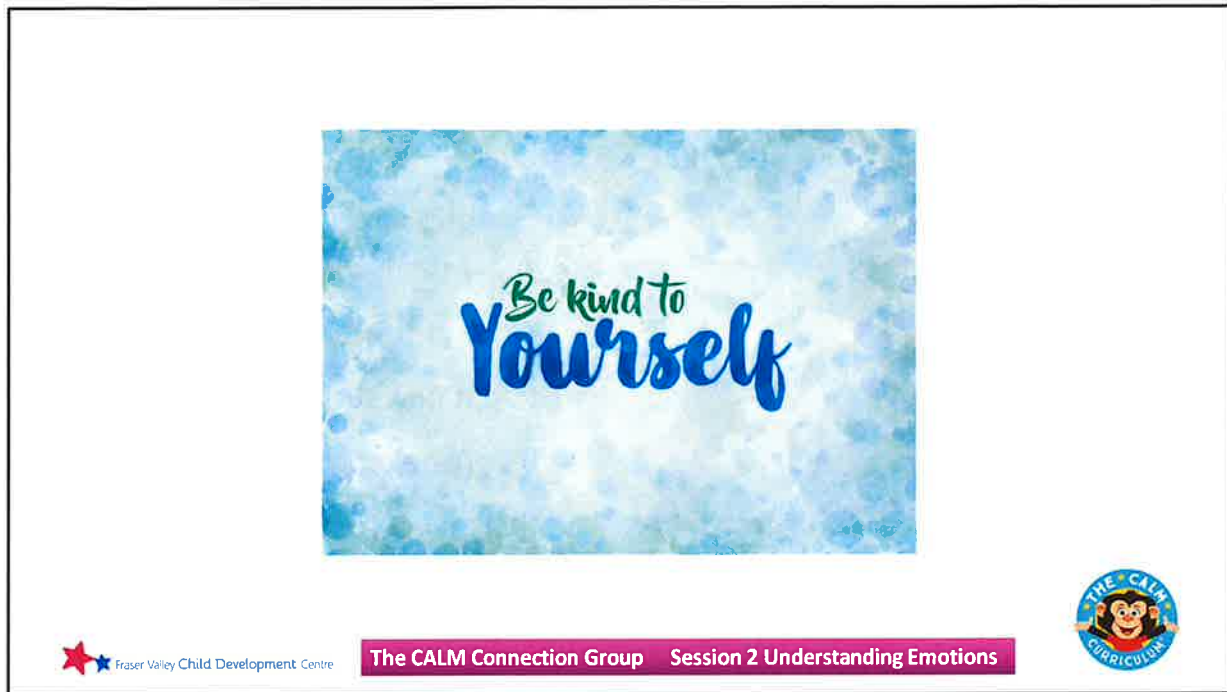
### ***Facilitators...if you can, share your story...***

#### My Story...

My mom was very strict with me growing up, due to being female and being brought up in a close South Asian Community. I was sheltered and protected, and to me, it felt like unfairness as my freedom was restricted comparatively to my brothers.

Now, I do find that every once in a while, I become stricter with my own daughter than I might be with my son. When I reflect on where this is coming from, I become more self-aware that it was because of the way I was parented. As a result, this awareness helps me to practice my parenting differently.

Sometimes these narratives can be hard to reflect on and if they are too hard, please come see us so we can find you the support and resources you may need to articulate your story in a meaningful way.



A secure, safe connection and reflecting on your story requires that you are taking care of yourself too.

Your child/children require a lot of your time and attention. This can be draining on your energy and capability to provide the connection responses your child needs from you.

Parenting is very hard work, and you will have many, many times when you feel absolutely exhausted and out of energy.

As a parent you are committed to taking care of your child's health, safety and emotional needs....that is why you are here... and if they could articulate it, they would want the same for you too.

This demanding yet rewarding work of a parent requires that as parents we take care of our SOS needs too.

This means having **“Space of Self Time.”**



There is a reason why on flights, the attendants ask you to put on your air mask first before helping your child with theirs.



**Read the slide.** You need to make sure that you are receiving the oxygen you need first before you can be present to help your child.

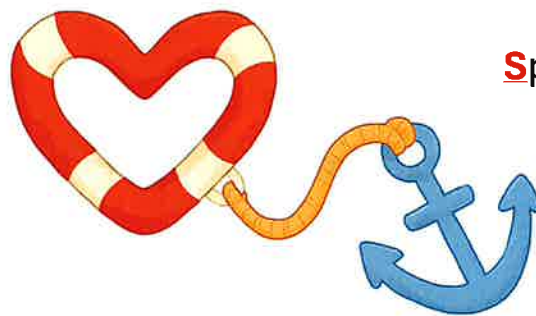
How many of you take time for self-care and doing the things that are important to you so that you can re-energize?

Often, we feel guilty when we practice self-care, but it is so important to remember that “Space of Self Time” is a need and necessity for your well-being. This affects the well-being of your child.....because now your capacity to be present has increased. Some examples of self-care are .....

- Walk in nature
- Coffee with a friend
- time to yourself
- being mindful to take the time
- Micro breaks – Five minutes to breathe and be present

So, when you start to feel guilty about having self time, you need to get really good at having self-compassion. We are going to help you learn how to do this in session 5.

# Understanding Emotions



Space **O**f **S**afety



This brings us to the end of our session and perhaps providing you some reflection on the importance of allowing our children our safe space to be able to be authentic with any emotion they are feeling, even those super hard ones that we will talk about next week.

For this week, let's just practice on fostering a space to build our children's emotional literacy and anchoring them with the love saver need for a Space of Emotional Safety.

## Homework...



**Read:** One of your child's favourite books and reflect on how the characters are feeling



**Read:** Melvin's Emotions



**Sing:** "If you're happy and you know it" and other fun songs.



**Reflect:** On your story and early life experiences



**Practice:** Self Care and slower paced movements



For today's session, your homework invitation includes:

- Reading a book with your child or sharing an oral story
- Read a favourite book with your child and reflect on how the characters are feeling in the story.
- Reflect on your story and early life experiences and how these have shaped your memory and influence your current parenting style.
- Practicing Self-Care and become aware of your movements and voice tone and pace.

We also invite you to sing "If you're happy and you know it"

## Homework Reflection Questions



My child sometimes expresses frustration, sadness, or anger. What choices do I make in these moments?



How do I respond to the strong, exuberant emotions and excitement that my child brings to their play and learning?






Please take a moment to consider these reflection questions and as you practice the homework, take opportunities (if you can) to write these responses on the worksheet in your parent package.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Where am I in my understanding of the meaning of **Emotional Self-Awareness**.

How am I doing in my practice of using **Emotional Self-Awareness** skills with my child.


**The CALM Connection Group**
Session 2 Understanding Emotions

Before you leave, please fill out the top part of the self-assessment sheet on emotional self-awareness.

This helps us know how we did with transferring the information to you. IF you are at the third or fourth arrow, you are ready to practice what you have learned, if you are at the first or second arrow, please connect with us so that we can spend some more time understanding this concept together.

At the end of the week, we will want you to fill out the practice piece which is the bottom arrows to help us understand where you rate yourself on doing this skill in your everyday routines and activities.



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Fraser Valley Child Development Centre

The CALM Connection Group Session 2 Understanding Emotions



***Greet participants as they enter the room and use the Melvin count down strip to let them know that you will start.***

Facilitators Acknowledge:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this group. We know that your time is valuable, and we appreciate you being here.

We truly want to create an environment where you feel safe to share and ask questions.

We know that sometimes due to the sensitive nature of some of the topics it may be hard to share your thoughts or concerns, so please do not hesitate to talk to one of the facilitators after the group.

**ONLY DISCUSS BELOW IF CHILD GROUP IS PROVIDED -**

Your children will be learning new skills with the educators in the other room. Today and every time we meet, they will be supported through transitions using the countdown strip, which we will talk about at the end of this session. At the end

of each session, we will send you home with the tools that your child was introduced to in their session. If your children are not participating in the group, we invite you to use these strategies at home.

## References: Module 2

### IMAGES (Continued)

- Slide 28: Liderina. Happy Parents Playing with Daughter. Digital Image. Shutterstock. October 4, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/happy-parents-playing-their-daughter-mark-609344102>
- Slide 29: Ksdundra07. Silhouette of person sitting on pier. Digital Image. Shutterstock. October 4, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/silhouette-person-sitting-on-pier-against-1814803133>
- Slide 30: Chainarong06. Close up young Asian woman smiling. Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/close-young-asian-woman-smiling-happiness-1379915203>
- Slide 31: Toivo Media. Be Kind to Yourself. Digital Image. Shutterstock. July 23, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/be-kind-yourself-text-design-style-1190513797>
- Slide 32: Pavel Shlykov. Air hostess in blue uniform. She explains how to use an oxygen mask in emergency case. Digital Image. Shutterstock. October 11, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/air-hostess-blue-uniform-she-explains-389260947>



***Greet participants as they enter the room and use the Melvin count down strip to let them know that you will start.***

Facilitators Acknowledge:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this group. We know that your time is valuable, and we appreciate you being here.

We truly want to create an environment where you feel safe to share and ask questions.

We know that sometimes due to the sensitive nature of some of the topics it may be hard to share your thoughts or concerns, so please do not hesitate to talk to one of the facilitators after the group.

**ONLY DISCUSS BELOW IF CHILD GROUP IS PROVIDED -**

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of each session, we will send you home with the tools that your child was introduced to in their session. If your children are not participating in the group, we invite you to use these strategies at home.

