

## Adult to Child Responsiveness Checklist 2018

| Unhelpful Response                           | Spoken or implicit message                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Attuned Response     | Spoken or implicit message                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Disapproving</b>                          | Don't cry ("your feelings are making me uncomfortable"). Non-verbal message "Feelings are not expressed in this family – stop having the feelings that you are feeling". Don't be "you".                                   | <b>Accepting</b>     | Child cries. "I can see that you're hurting. It's okay to feel uncomfortable feelings". "I'm here if you want to talk about it; I'm here for you". Is there anything else that may help?                                                                         |
| <b>Dismissing</b>                            | "You'll get over it (smiling at distressed child). Come on now, try to cheer up – you're making me sad just looking at you". Message: "Don't have feelings or express them – find an emotion that's easier for me (happy). | <b>Empathic</b>      | So you're feeling pretty unhappy right now. Sounds like so much pain and hurt about XXXX?                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Defensive</b>                             | Don't blame me; don't be cross with me now.<br><br>How can you feel like this after all I do for you? (Guilt inducing)                                                                                                     | <b>Open</b>          | I understand how angry you may feel with me. Maybe you're feeling let down by me? So perhaps you're seeing me as someone who just doesn't understand/care what you're going through? Perhaps you think I don't see how important this is for you? Is that right? |
| <b>Deflecting<br/>(changing the subject)</b> | Unspoken message: "I can't handle what you're feeling right now, so I'm going to try to get you to focus on something else."                                                                                               | <b>Acknowledging</b> | I'm finding this difficult, but let me see if I've understood what you're saying – You're furious and upset that Dad and I are splitting up. You hate me for us not staying together – have I got that right?                                                    |
| <b>Diminishing</b>                           | You're not hurting as much as you say you are.<br>You're over-reacting.<br>You're making a mountain out of a molehill.                                                                                                     | <b>Accurate</b>      | I'd like you to help me understand what you're feeling about this?                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Defining<br/>(Theorising)</b>                          | I'll tell you why you're feeling what you are feeling. For example, "You're just over-tired dear".                                                                                                 | <b>Curious</b>                                                | I'd like you to help me understand what you're feeling about this? Will you help me understand?                                                                  |
| <b>Talking at the Child<br/>(Advise, little lectures)</b> | What you need to do is just put all this behind you and get on with your life. No point in dwelling on it – what's happened has happened.                                                          | <b>Connecting with the Child</b>                              | So, this is really spoiling your life/bothering you right now. It's probably hard to think about other things or enjoy the things you usually do, at the moment. |
| <b>Competing</b>                                          | I'm feeling worse than you. I can't give attention to what you're feeling, in fact, I need you to pay attention to what I'm feeling. (Unspoken message: My feelings are more important than yours) | <b>Prioritising the Child</b>                                 | I can see that you're feeling strongly about this (angry/anxious). Let's sit down and talk about it. I'm listening – you have my full attention.                 |
| <b>Cliches</b>                                            | Life's hard/Be a man/Get over it/Don't cry/Be Mummy's little soldier/No-one said life was going to be easy/Welcome to the real world.                                                              | <b>Language specific to the pain of this particular child</b> | You've had so much loss in your life lately and some people have let you down, so understandably, it's hard to feel trusting again.                              |
| <b>Ignoring</b>                                           | No response or minimal response, as if the child's feelings are not worth noticing at all.                                                                                                         | <b>Attentive</b>                                              | Thank you so much for letting me know what you're feeling about that. Because now we can think together about what to do about it.                               |
| <b>Questioning</b>                                        | Why do you feel that? What's the point in feeling that? How long have you been feeling that? So, what do you intend to do about it?                                                                | <b>Imagining in</b>                                           | I can imagine that when they said that it felt very hurtful.                                                                                                     |
| <b>Overwhelming</b>                                       | Oh, my poor baby. This is awful/terrible. See now you've got me crying too.                                                                                                                        | <b>Attuning</b>                                               | Sounds like you've been really worrying about what might happen; it's been very difficult for you to hold these worries on your own until now.                   |

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