

# Book Review

## SOMETIMES I FEEL ...

### HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD MANAGE DIFFICULT FEELINGS

Dr Samantha Seymour

Finch Publishing, 2009 ([www.finch.com.au](http://www.finch.com.au))

This approachable, highly visual book by Dr. Samantha Seymour, clinical psychologist, is aimed at parents of children between the ages of about two and seven years who are grappling with how best to help their children manage difficult emotions. The book is appealing for its sensitive and respectful portrayal of children, and promotion of child-focused, authoritative and empathetic parenting. The book content alternates between providing simply presented, evidence-based information for parents about appropriate strategies to use to assist their child with the complex business of managing emotions like anger and sadness, and sections filled with delightful black and white photographs of children experiencing and resolving difficult emotions, designed for parents to use with their children to explore these emotions together and consider ways to manage them.

The book is presented in five sections, beginning with a general introduction of about 9 pages that provides broad guidance for parents to help them foster positive emotional development and emotional regulation in children. This section touches on concepts such as recognition and labelling of emotions, building emotional 'literacy' in children, leading by example through appropriate management of one's own emotions, and providing information about basic relaxation strategies that parents can teach to their children.

The remaining four sections of the book address anger, sadness, shyness and worry in children respectively. Each section opens with a double page of information for parents, normalising the emotion in children, exploring common triggers for the emotion, discussing the ways children might display the emotion and providing a small number of simple management strategies parents may wish to use to assist their child with the emotion. Across all sections of the book that are aimed at parents, I found the information to be well balanced and sensitively pitched to be appealing to parents from a wide range of educational and social backgrounds.

Each interactive section for parents to use with their children contains about 18-20 full page black and white images, faced on the opposite page with a simple statement or phrase in large print about the picture. The images in each section are aimed to achieve several goals:

- introduce and label the emotion by providing an image of a child experiencing that emotion;

- provide a number of examples of common situations in the lives of young children that might lead to the experience of that emotion;
- give examples of what the child might feel like doing when experiencing that emotion;
- normalise the experience of the emotion for children;
- provide simple suggestions for things children can do to feel better.

Each picture section finishes with a positive image of a child having resolved the difficult emotion.

The images in this book are thoughtfully chosen to represent cultural diversity in Australia and gender balance. Children across the target age range are represented and the images are artistic and aesthetically appealing. There are just two images in the book with which I was not comfortable. One image in the section about anger depicts a child in martial arts uniform, with accompanying text that reads 'sometimes I even feel like hitting out at someone', and I found this link between feeling like hitting out and a sporting pursuit like martial arts that promotes discipline and respect did not fit appropriately for me. The very next page in the book depicts a child wearing a 'dunce' hat, and again I struggled with this – firstly, as I would hope our culture and schools have long since moved past humiliating children with the use of such devices and, secondly, as I doubt most children in the target age range would understand what the image is about. Other images in the book were compelling and appropriate.

In summary, I found this to be a terrific little book, and one I would consider purchasing for my practice and making available for parents to borrow as an adjunct to clinical work on managing emotions for children. The book is a lovely Australian addition to resources for parents of young children who are seeking guidance on how to help their child manage difficult emotions.

#### REVIEWED BY

**Dr Lisa Kettler**

Registered psychologist

Senior Lecturer in developmental and child clinical psychology  
University of Adelaide, SA 5005

# OzChild National Training Dates for 2010

For further information, contact: [trainer@ozchild.org.au](mailto:trainer@ozchild.org.au) or go to: [www.ozchild.org.au](http://www.ozchild.org.au)

## VICTORIA

13 <sup>th</sup> April	Bullying the Impact, and the Importance of Building Emotional Resilience in Children .....	Melbourne
14 <sup>th</sup> April	Behaviour as Communication, the what, why and communicative intent of children's behaviour .....	Melbourne
15 <sup>th</sup> April	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Melbourne
15 <sup>th</sup> April	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Melbourne
27 <sup>th</sup> April	Precision Academics – Developing effective curriculum for students with special needs .....	Dandenong
11 <sup>th</sup> May	Precision Academics – Developing effective curriculum for students with special needs .....	Frankston
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Melbourne
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Melbourne

## NEW SOUTH WALES

21 <sup>st</sup> May	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Williamstown
21 <sup>st</sup> May	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Williamstown
27 <sup>th</sup> May	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Sydney
27 <sup>th</sup> May	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Sydney
27 <sup>th</sup> July	Behaviour as Communication, the what, why and communicative intent of children's behaviour .....	Nowra

## ACT

16 <sup>th</sup> June	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Canberra City
16 <sup>th</sup> June	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Canberra City

## QUEENSLAND

23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Brisbane
23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Brisbane
6 <sup>th</sup> May	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Townsville
27 <sup>th</sup> May	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Townsville

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

2 <sup>nd</sup> August	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Darwin
2 <sup>nd</sup> August	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Darwin
5 <sup>th</sup> August	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Alice Springs
5 <sup>th</sup> August	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Alice Springs

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

30 <sup>th</sup> June	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Adelaide
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Adelaide

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Resilience – What is it? How do we become resilient? A creative, activity based workshop .....	Perth
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Expressions – Comprehensive training in a practical resource for engaging any client group .....	Perth

## OTHER WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE AUSTRALIA-WIDE:

- ✧ Basics of Private Practice
- ✧ Reflective parenting
- ✧ 'Report Writing' – Court reports, TAC, Work Cover
- ✧ Autism
- ✧ Autism in the Mainstream Classroom
- ✧ Bringing Fun Home – for Kinship Carers