

Getting further support

Caring for children at this time can feel isolating and overwhelming. The following organisations provide excellent support:

www.youngminds.org.uk including free parents helpline Monday-Friday 9.30-4pm:
0808 802 5544

www.annafreud.org - support and advice around the mental health needs of children and families, including excellent resources to support families during the Coronavirus pandemic.

www.mind.org.uk—advice and support for anyone experiencing mental health difficulties.

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole,
Educational Psychology Service



Support for Parents and Carers during the Coronavirus Pandemic



Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole,
Educational Psychology Service



The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on the lives of us all. For those of us who are parents or carers, concerns about the wellbeing of our children can make it difficult for us to pay attention to our own needs. However, a bit like in an emergency situation on an aeroplane, it is important for us to put on our own oxygen masks first so that we can be available to help others who depend upon us.

This is easier said than done of course, when time and resources may be very limited. However, we hope these suggestions for looking after yourself at this time are helpful.



Aim for a routine but don't sweat the small(er) stuff!

It helps to have a routine, especially when the days are long and much the same. Again, the routine that works for you will depend on your own circumstances and the age and needs of your child/ren. If at the end of the day you feel that you have not achieved what you set out to achieve, reduce your goals and decide what really matters.

One of the main concerns of parents and carers is around engaging children in learning whilst at home. Please be reassured that this is a challenge for almost all families and that school staff fully understand this. Teachers (and Educational Psychologists!) are often parents too and also find this difficult. Our advice is that the priority right now is for families to focus on their wellbeing, play and having as much fun as possible. Communicate with your children's school and let them know how you and your children are getting on. If your child is keen to complete their school learning then that is fine, but if not, focus on the bits they find more enjoyable and know that school staff will be ready to support them in whatever way they need when schools reopen.



Connect with others—but don't compare!

We are all in this together, although it is true to say that we are not all in the same boat! Each of us has our own set of circumstances and our own unique challenges. This means that what works for one family can't work for all.

It can be very helpful to speak with others but can sometimes make us feel worse, as can looking on social media! Choose carefully, and consider finding further support from the organisations at the end of this leaflet.



Use Feelings Checks

Try to build in times in the day to check out your feelings and to ask others in your family how they feel too.

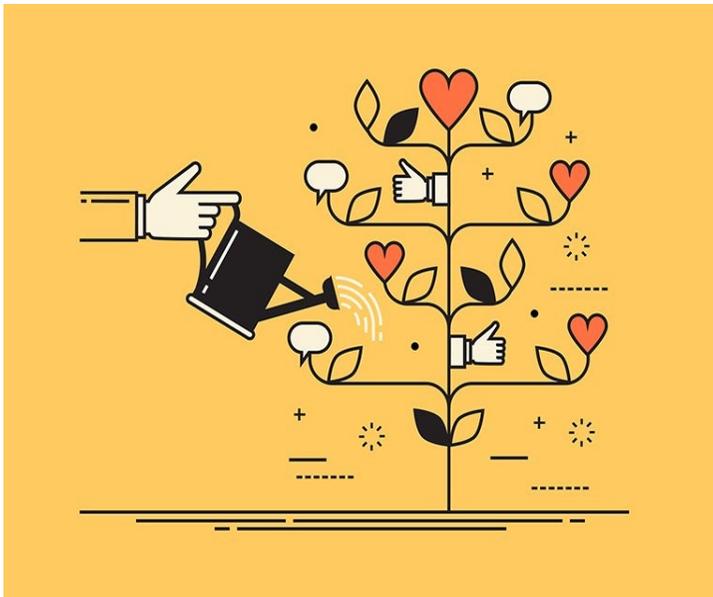
Some days will be stressful, when things don't go to plan or arguments erupt. This can't be helped. When we're feeling stressed, it can help to just accept the feeling and not blame others for it. Let those around you know that we all go up and down a bit in our emotions, and that's okay. When children see their parents and carers doing this without blaming others, it also helps them to understand and regulate their own feelings.



Be Kind to yourself

Things are difficult; many of the routines we have been used to have changed and many of us have additional demands and new worries.

Under these circumstances, this is a great time to be especially kind to yourself. Be proud when you achieve a goal, however small it may seem, and be forgiving when things don't go to plan. Again, try to express your kindness towards yourself so that your children see it, for example by rewarding or comforting yourself with a sit down and a coffee or a quiet bath.



It's okay to say sorry!

We all make mistakes, especially when we are under pressure and stress. If we can acknowledge when we don't get things right, whilst also showing ourselves kindness and forgiveness, this is good for our wellbeing. It is also one of the best lessons we can teach our children.

Saying sorry also gives us a chance to reflect on what we may need which will help us to get back on track - perhaps a walk outside or a chat on the phone with a friend.

