

Bringing up Great Kids
**PARENTING AFTER
FAMILY VIOLENCE**
HANDOUTS



What is self-compassion?

Researcher Kristin Neff says “There is an alternative to that harsh self-talk: self-compassion.

“self-compassion provides an island of calm, a refuge from the stormy seas of endless positive and negative self-judgment.” As Neff defines it, self-compassion entails three components:

- “First, it requires self-kindness, that we be gentle and understanding with ourselves rather than harshly critical and judgmental.”
- “Second, it requires recognition of our common humanity, feeling connected with others in the experience of life rather than feeling isolated and alienated by our suffering.”
- “Third, it requires mindfulness—that we hold our experience in balanced awareness, rather than ignoring our pain or exaggerating it.”

Self-kindness: being supportive and understanding towards ourselves when we’re having a hard time, rather than being harshly self-critical.

Connectedness: remembering that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficulties at times. We are not alone!

Mindfulness: self-compassion involves recognising when we’re stressed or struggling without being judgemental or over-reacting.

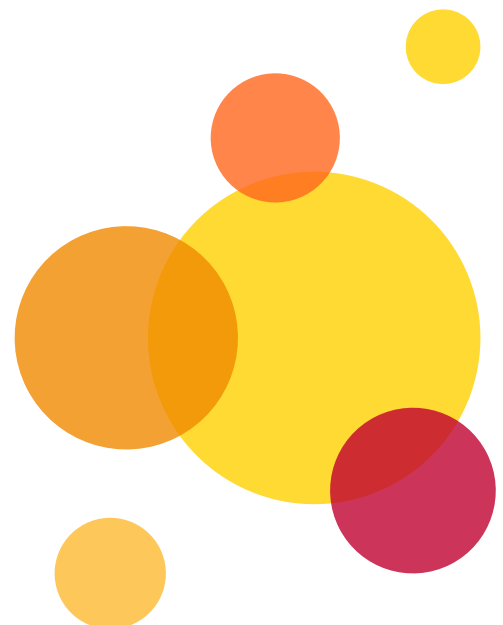
Self-compassion can be practiced by following a 3 step process as follows: (Kristin Neff)

1. **Mindfulness:** acknowledge your suffering ‘I’m really struggling with this’

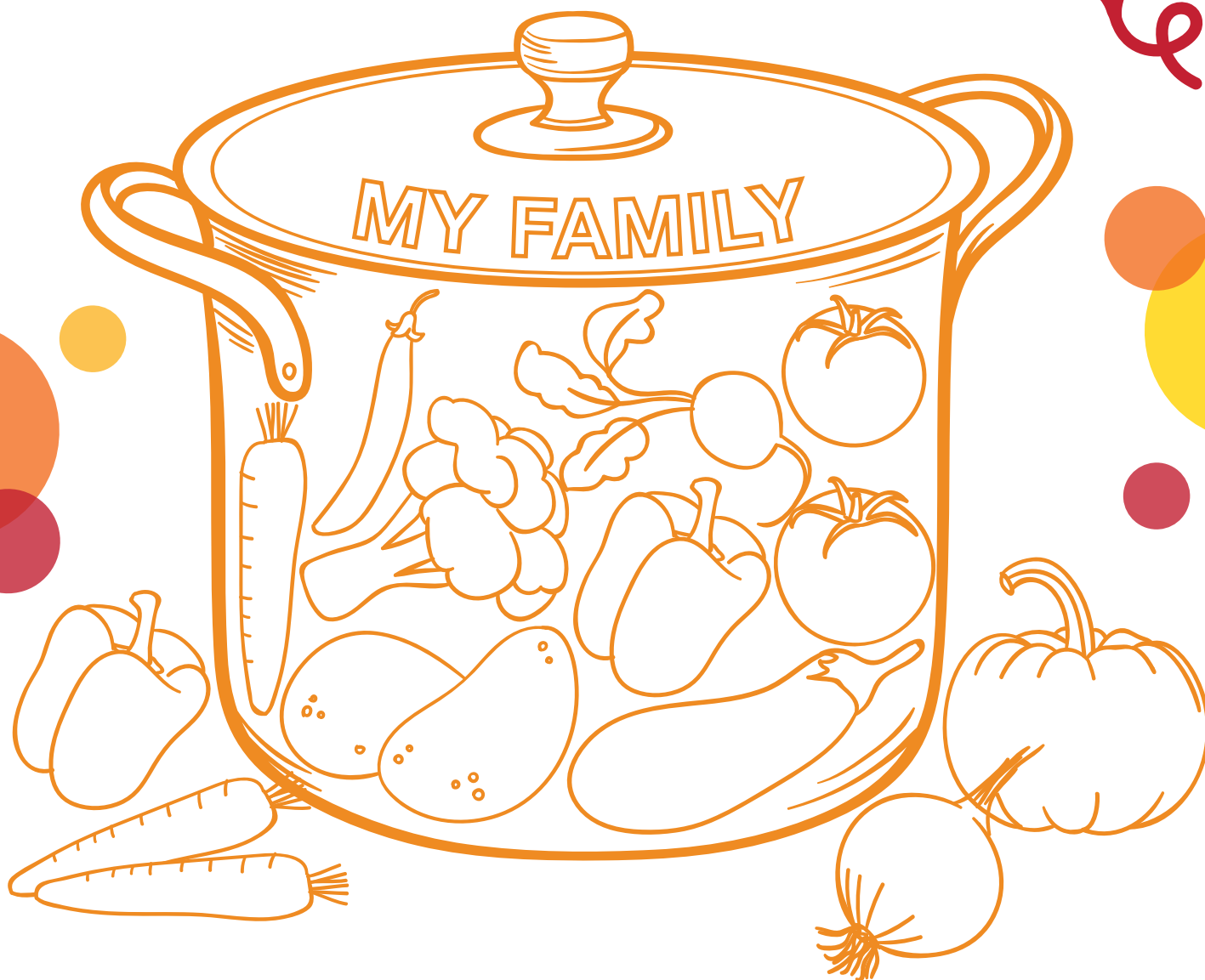
Become aware of how you are feeling. Notice what is happening in your body and in your thoughts.

2. **Common humanity:** normalise your suffering ‘Many people feel like this in this situation’
Connect your experience with that of all parents everywhere.

3. **Self-Kindness.** Be kind to yourself in your suffering.



Family Soup



Notes



Pause on Positives



★ My favourite moment with my kids this week was...

★ One way that I stayed in touch with friends this week was...

★ One way I was kind to myself this week was...

One of life's secrets:
Learn to pause
Emerge positive

★ One person who supported me this week that I feel grateful for is...

★ One way I could connect more with my kids next week is...

★ A simple pleasure I could treat myself to next week is...



- How would you and your child's story be different if you didn't take even the smallest steps to keep yourself and your child safe? How did you know that small action would work?
- What strength did it take? What do you think your child would say to you if they could understand how much strength it took to care for them in your family during that time?
- What do you say to yourself now after thinking about it? Talk to yourself in a kind, caring way like you would to a good friend who is having a hard time

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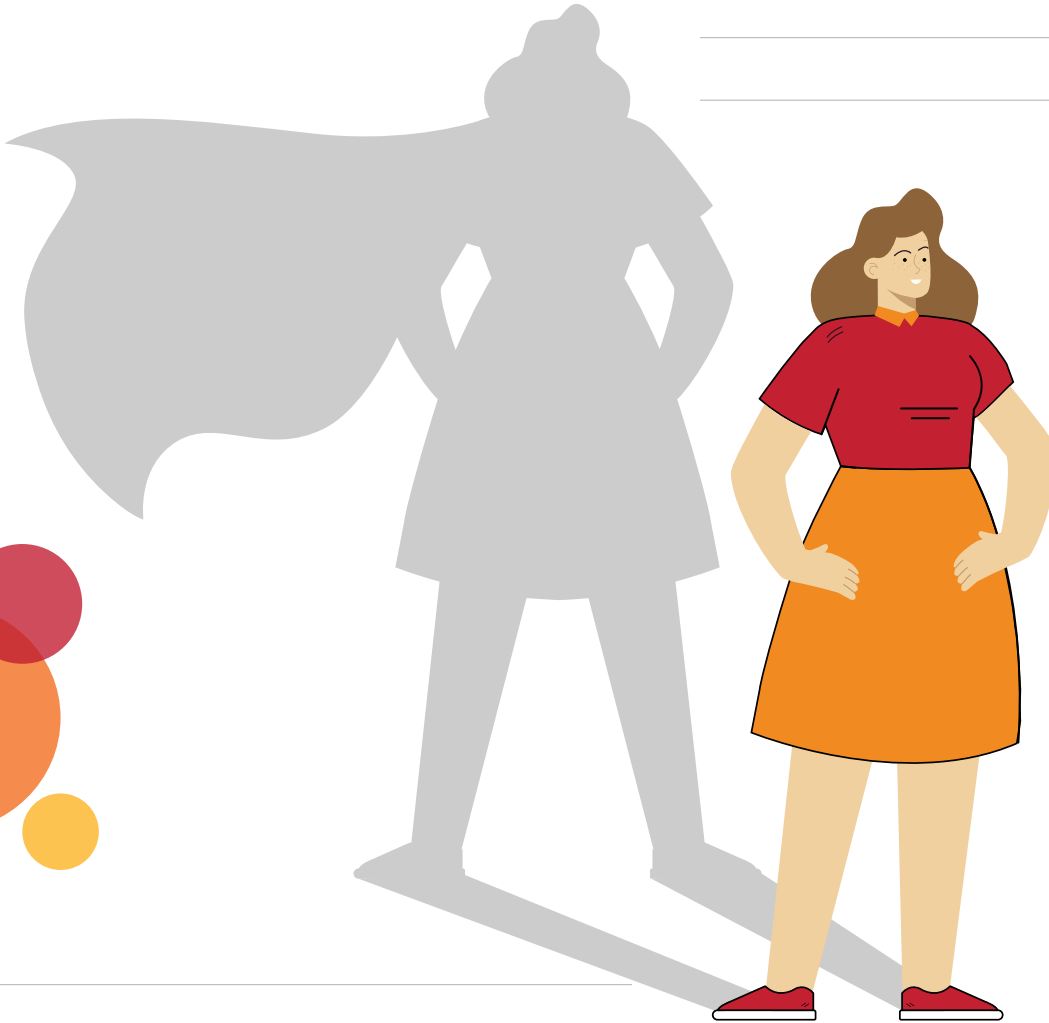


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Strengths as a parent





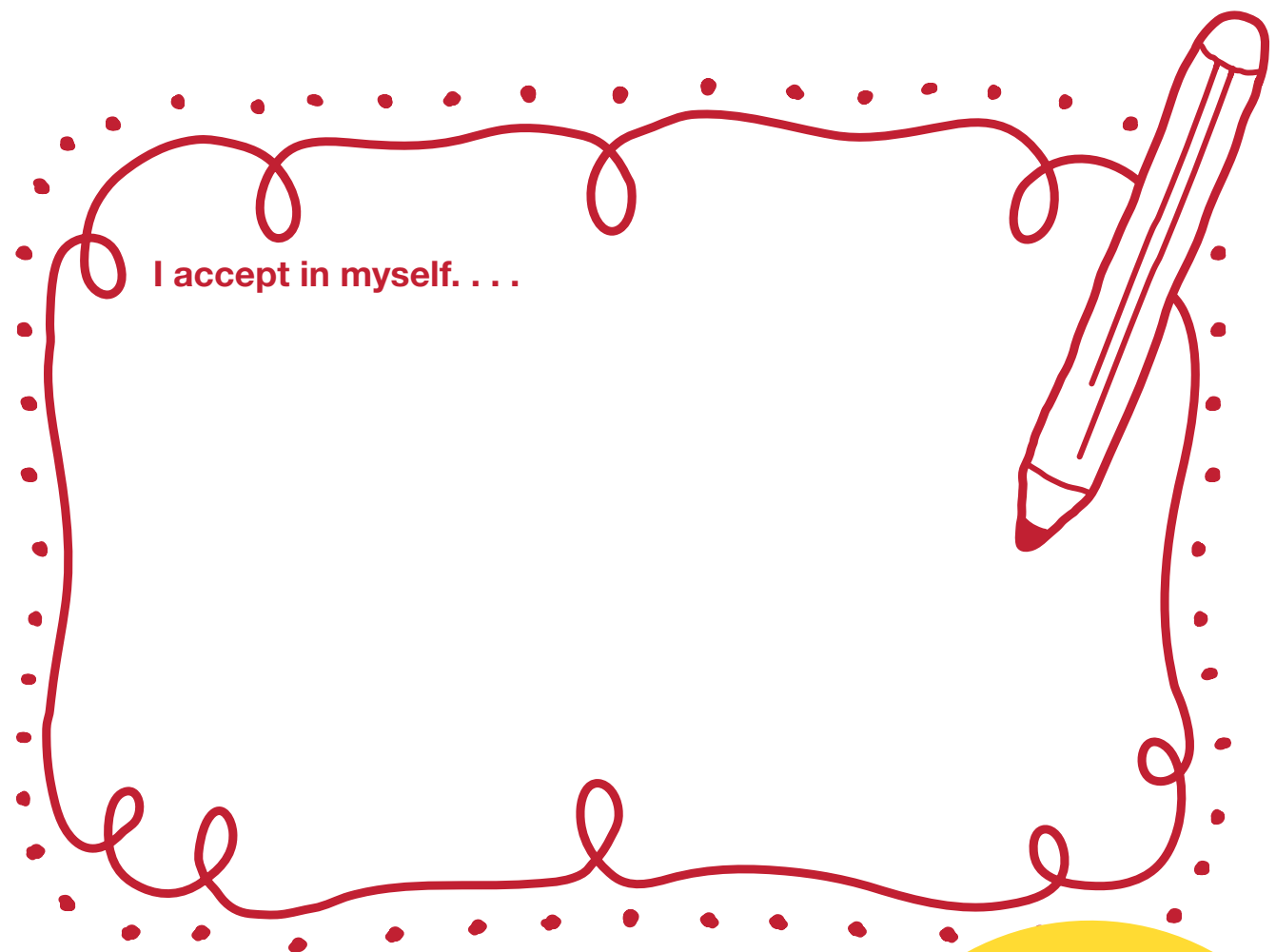
Chapter 2: Challenging the messages of violence



Reframe the observations made by your inner critic in a friendly, positive way.

If you're having trouble thinking of what words to use, you might want to imagine what a very compassionate friend would say to you in this situation. It might help to use a term of endearment that strengthens expressed feelings of warmth and care (but only if it feels natural).

While engaging in this supportive self-talk, you might want to try gently stroking your arm, or holding your face tenderly in your hands. The important thing is that you start acting kindly, be accepting and feelings of true warmth and caring will eventually follow.



“Self-compassion is a form of acceptance of ourselves while we’re in pain”

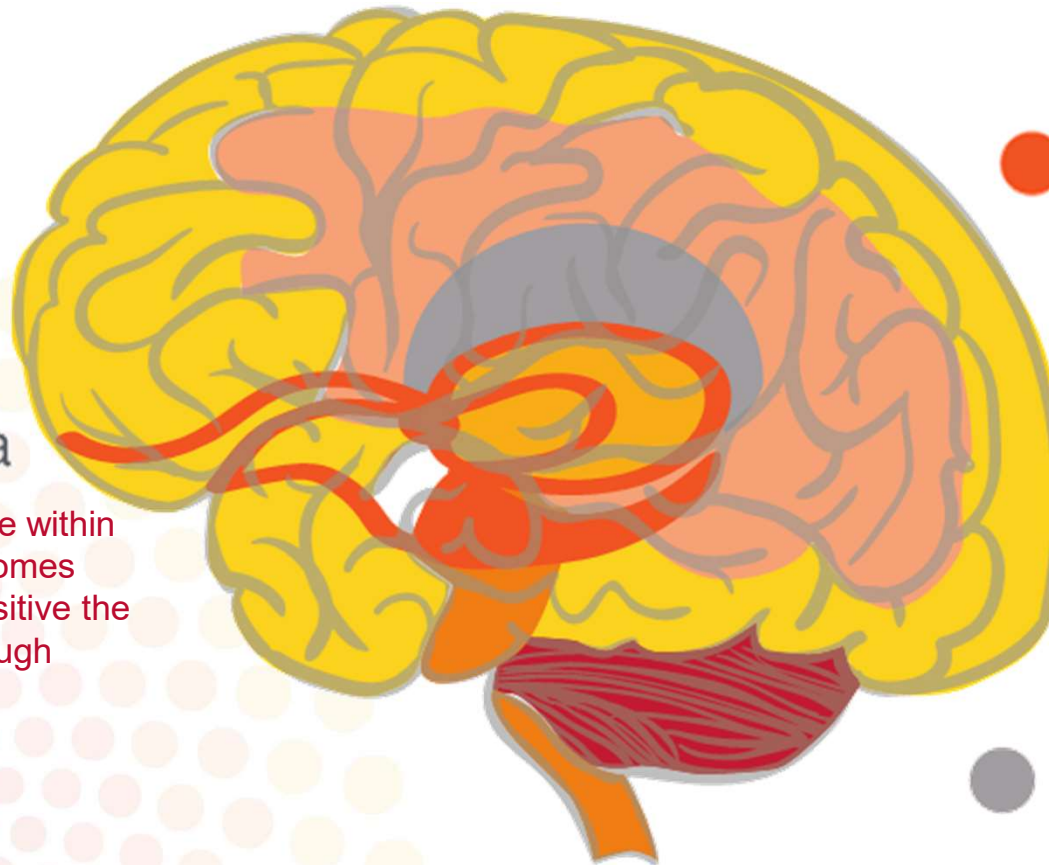
Christopher Germer



A child's brain develops through relationships with others. The quality of these relationships shape children's brain development.

The diagram features two stylized human heads in profile, facing each other. Inside each head is a simplified brain with a yellow upper portion and a red lower portion. Two large, thick yellow arrows connect the two heads, one pointing from the left head to the right head, and the other pointing from the right head to the left head, creating a reciprocal loop. The entire illustration is set against a white background.

Where trauma affects the brain



Amygdala

Survival response centre within the limbic lobe that becomes enlarged and more sensitive the more it is activated through responding to threats

Hippocampus

Consolidates memory by providing the context/ sequential data for episodic memories. Goes offline if trauma overwhelms and disrupts cortex.

Corpus Callosum

Bridge between the 2 hemispheres. Chronic stress can damage and thin down this bundle of neurons

Mindfulness Bottle



Make your own Mindfulness Bottle. It can support you to be mindful and calm down when you or your children are overwhelmed with big feelings.

Bring the following items:

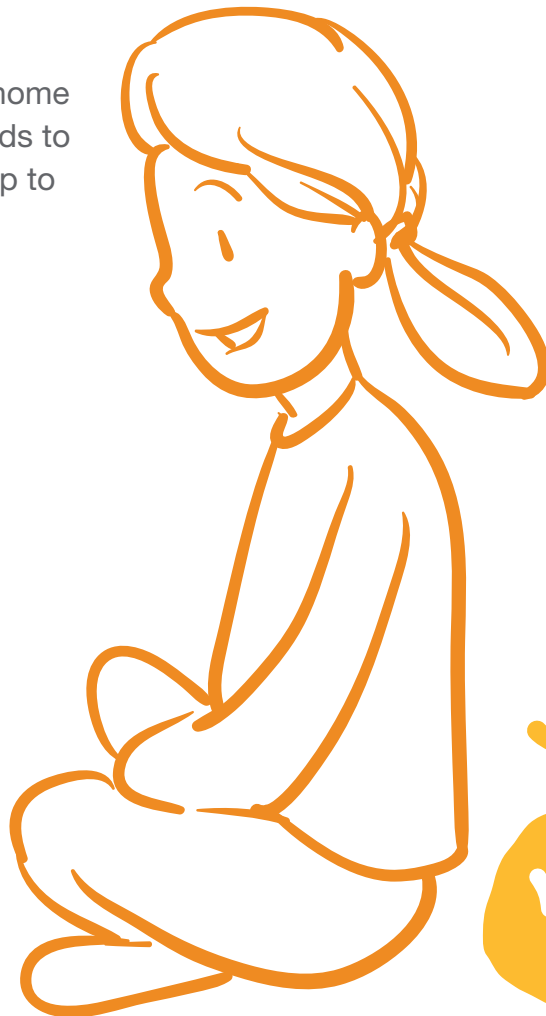
- An empty and clean transparent bottle
- Sparkles or glitter in three or four colors (the tinier the better)
- Glycerin
- Liquid soap

Fill three quarters of the bottle with warm water (not hot, just warm!). Add four drops of liquid soap. Fill the bottle almost to the top with glycerin. Put on the lid and shake the bottle and dissolve soap and glycerin in the water until you have a smooth liquid.

Now the water represents your calm state of mind. Add each color of sparkles or glitter being mindful about one of your feelings. Put the lid back on and your mindfulness bottle is ready.

When you shake the bottle, similar to when we are touched by big feelings, the water gets unclear and the different colors move in all directions and are inseparable and each unrecognisable from the other. As time goes and we are looking at the bottle (and breathing mindfully) the water gets more and more clear and sparkles/glitter settles down to the bottom.

You can use this bottle as a common tool at home with your family members. Anybody who needs to be mindful about their feelings and needs help to manage their big feelings can use the bottle!



Barriers to Communication



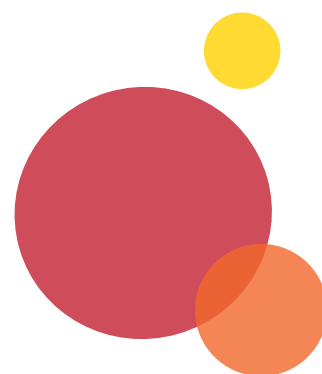
‘Waht tnihs get in the way
of us cmomuntcanig celalry
wtih our clihrdn?’

‘Yuor bairn is so pfworeul, taht it
can raed sntcenecs wtih mexid
up wrdos as lnog as the frsit and
lsat lterets are in the rgiht pacle.’



Transforming Messages





Transforming Messages





Anthill Scenarios



7 month old

Cries loudly
when left at
Childcare and
when put in cot
for sleep.

My child does that because
he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

2 year old

Screams,
throws them
self on floor and
kicks, when
taken off coin-in-slot
ride at shopping centre.

My child does that because
he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

4 year old

Cries loudly
when left at
Childcare and when
put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because
he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

6 year old

Stares at
the window
during class
time, leaves
work uncompleted.

My child does that because
he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

8 year old

Hits other children
and disrupts other
children's games.

My child does that because
he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

10 year old

Very quiet,
with a blank
expression on
their face. Never
asks for help.
Chooses to stay in the
library at lunchtimes.

My child does that because
he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

Breathing Relaxation Exercises



1 Abdominal Breathing

Place one hand over your heart and the other over your abdomen. Breathe normally, noticing the rise and fall of your chest and abdomen. Continue this practice for about 10 breaths.

2 1,2,3.....Sigh!

Count slowly 1...2...3 (either aloud or silently) as you breathe in. Then give a long sigh as you breathe out. Repeat this several times until you feel yourself calming down.

3 Snake breathing

Breathe in normally. Then with a long breath out, make a SSSSSSSSS sound like a snake.

4 Bee breathing

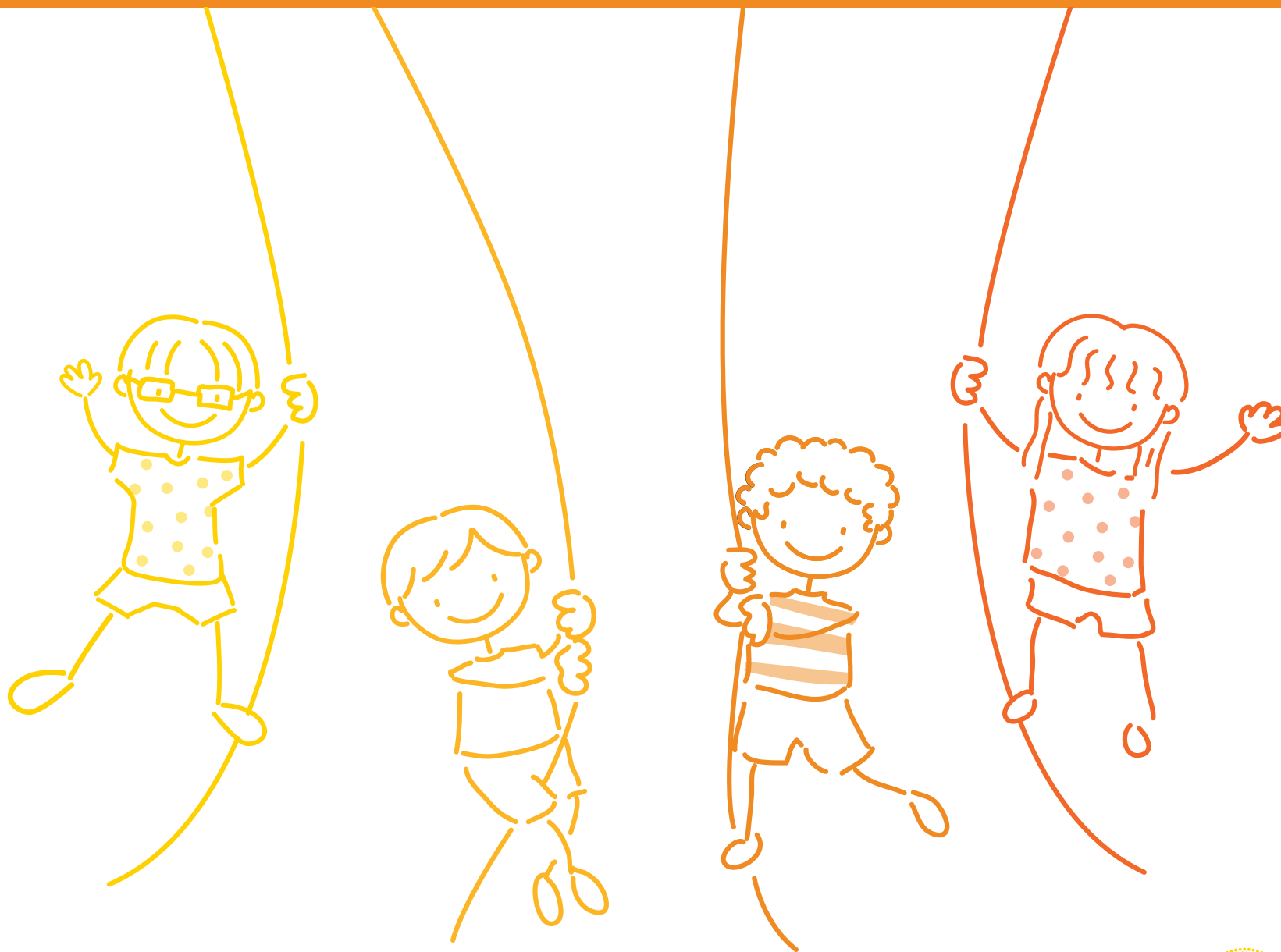
Breathe in normally. Then make a humming or buzzing sound like a bee as you exhale an extended breath out.

5 Feather breathing

Hold a soft feather in one hand and raise that hand as you breathe in. Let go of the feather and breathe out slowly as you watch the feather float to the ground. Try to make your breath out last until the feather reaches the ground.



Strengths of my child



Using the available resources, think about each of your children, identify their strengths and write them across the rope they are hanging on.



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Good Enough Parenting (Ed Tronick)

Matching State
Approx 30%



Rupture



Mis-match
Approx 70%

Matching State
Approx 30%



Repair
Learning

Rupture



Mis-match
Approx 70%

Matching State
Approx 30%



Repair
Learning



Having a look to this illustration, please discuss the following questions in your group:

- How do you feel about your relationship with your child?
- How can a rupture in relationship be an opportunity for learning and growth?
- Do you feel able to repair after a relationship rupture?



Asking for help



1 How easy do you find it to ask for help?

2 When you are upset or having problems, are you more likely to go away by yourself to try to solve the problem, or talk to someone else?

3 How do you feel when you leave your child in the care of someone else?

4 How well do you think your cries for help were answered when you were a child?

5 What might have got in the way of people meeting your needs as a child?



Asking for help



6 How do you feel about these statements?

"It's my job to look after my children, no one else's job."

"It takes a village to raise a child."

"Every parent needs help at times."

7 Who do you feel comfortable to ask for help with your children?



How to Change the Colour of Your Day



Have you ever noticed that the way you are feeling affects the kind of day you have with your children?

When we are tired, stressed or cranky, we more easily become frustrated and impatient and less playful with our kids.

When this happens, power struggles are more likely between us and our kids and we become more reactive – then our connection with our kids gets broken.

BUT....

When we take a few moments to **STOP**, to **PAUSE** – take some mindful breaths and reflect on how we're feeling....

THEN....

We reconnect with our children and 'change the colour of our day' with our kids.

**CONNECT WITH YOUR BREATH TO STAY
CONNECTED WITH YOUR KIDS!**

