

## Keeping Your Cool When It All Gets a Bit Much...

1. Tell yourself to **wait** before responding.
2. **Breathe** - couple of focused breaths to calm your brain.
3. Notice and **name your feeling** to yourself.
4. **Speak your mantra** - Anything that resonates with you. I don't want to lose my temper, I want to do the best for my children, I love my children, they're still learning. Both noticing and naming your feeling and speaking your mantra will make you think, and thus engage your more rational upstairs brain.
5. **Give yourself a few minutes out**, if it is safe to leave your children. This is also modelling good emotional regulation for your children!



*"Your behaviour is making me cross and I want to give myself a few minutes to calm down and think about how best to help and talk to you."*

6. **Try not to take your child's behaviour personally** but **be curious** e.g. is it because he's still learning, might he be tired, worried etc.... promotes more rational thinking and also can make you more empathetic towards your child which diffuses anger. How you appraise a situation will influence how you react.
7. **Playfulness** - silly dance, talk in a funny voice, tickling them  
*"Oh my goodness you are making me so angry I am going to have to do this silly dance!"*
8. **Laughter and smiling** - Reduce your stress hormones and also reduce your child's which then actually makes it easier to redirect the behaviour.
9. **Identify your triggers** - when are you likely to be most irritable or what behaviours are most likely to push your buttons.

### Check Out:

- ❖ **Child Mind Institute**- Daily tips and Corona Virus Videos on You Tube e.g. "Staying Calm" & "Parenting during Corona virus"
- ❖ **Dr Caroline Leaf**- follow on Instagram for daily tips and links to useful podcasts



## Looking After Yourself as a Parent

### Emotional Re-fuelling (*Margot Sunderland, 2007*)

Emotionally refuelling is crucial, it brings your brain and body's stress chemicals back to base level. If you don't emotionally refuel and have a child-free break, you can end up chronically stressed and bad tempered. This has a knock on effect on your children, who feel stressed by your stress, and this can trigger bad behaviour.

Some ideas:

- ❖ Try to go to bed early
- ❖ Spend time on a new hobby e.g. upcycling, crotchet, cooking baking, decluttering
- ❖ Exercise- DVDs, indoor gym equipment, daily walk, join the kids with Joe Wicks! Lots of gyms are currently doing online classes- explore!
  - ❖ Have a bath
  - ❖ Time with partner
- ❖ Connect with others e.g. Face time/ call friends and family, write letters
  - ❖ Journal or blog
- ❖ Do a "thought dump"- write down all your thoughts whether negative or positive on a page for 5 minutes. When finished, rip it up and throw away.
  - ❖ Meditation or prayer
- ❖ Try some focused breathing, relaxation or other grounding techniques
  - ❖ Reading
  - ❖ Spend time outside or in the garden
  - ❖ Talking to someone about your thoughts and feelings

### Check Out:

- ❖ **Child Mind Institute** for further information on parental "*Self-care in the Time of the Coronavirus*" and the importance of making time for yourself, prioritising healthy choices, being realistic, setting boundaries and reconnecting with things you enjoy. Other articles on "*Anxiety and Coping with the Coronavirus*" and "*How Mindfulness Can Help During COVID-19*".
- ❖ **Dr Carolyn Leaf**- follow on Instagram for top tips on parental self-care.
- ❖ **Grounding techniques** for parents (attached document).

❖ Seek extra support e.g.

- Links Counselling (028 38 342825; [info@linkscounselling.com](mailto:info@linkscounselling.com); [www.linkscounselling.com](http://www.linkscounselling.com)- "get counselling"; Instagram- "linkscounselling") to find out more about online video counselling, telephone counselling, instant messaging via WhatsApp. Links Instagram also provide daily positive messages and top tips.
- <https://helplinesni.com> to access information and signposting on a range of different family and parenting supports.