



Parenting during pandemic

Day 39: The power of being kind to yourself as a parent

Parents are feeling lots of things during the pandemic but for many there will be a general sense of being overwhelmed sometimes. This can be because of the balancing act of trying to working from home, home schooling, keeping up with social contacts from home, housework and so on. The list of tasks can feel endless and all of this has to be achieved while managing everyone's emotions and behaviours at home, making sure everyone has enough of your attention and enough support with their own tasks and so on.

So, sometimes we feel overwhelmed. Sometimes we don't get all of the tasks done and this can add other not so nice feelings. Some of these feelings can lead to thoughts about our coping or our abilities and we can feel self-doubt and low self-esteem. We have focused in other blogs on links between feelings, thoughts and behaviours, so the combination of the not so nice feelings and the self-critical thoughts mean we are behaviourally less likely to get things done. This is how vicious cycles start.

There is evidence in the psychology literature that practicing self-compassion can help us to get things done if we have been putting things off. Self-compassion is about being kind to ourselves and approaching tasks we find difficult or overwhelming from a place of being gentle and kind to ourselves rather than harsh and self-critical. If we are harsh and self-critical, we are likely to want to avoid things that make us feel like that so we put things off. Whereas if we accept that things are difficult sometimes and forgive ourselves for not getting everything done at times, these are not emotions we will feel the need to avoid and so we are more likely to try the difficult tasks.

We have also talked before about modelling. This is where we show our children how to do things by allowing them to see us doing them. What would you want for your children: for them to be harsh and self-critical, potentially self-doubting and/or with low self-esteem; or would you want them to be kind and gentle with themselves and accept that things are difficult sometimes but they can still face things even when they are difficult? If your children see you being self-compassionate, they will learn to do this too. This means that when we find it really hard to be self-compassionate, we can think that it is not only helpful for us but also helpful for our children if we try to be a little kinder to ourselves sometimes.



We hope these tips are helpful. Well done on managing another day off school and we hope you will join us again tomorrow.

Please contact us with questions, comments or topics you'd like to see covered. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Wishing you a safe and healthy path through this pandemic.