



WEEKLY PEP TALK FOR OUR SUPERHERO PARENTS

Q: I have noticed that my own mood is fluctuating as this social isolation persists. I am worried that my emotional ups and downs and overall low mood will have a negative impact on my kids. I know I need to be a good role model for my kids and I feel guilty that I may not be at this time. How do I support my child while being true to how I am feeling?

A: We are all going through a prolonged crisis and we will all have good days and very hard days regardless of our age or role in life. It's normal to feel overwhelmed or feel you have "hit a wall." Role modeling normal, real feelings and reactions to unusual and even traumatic times like these is very important to your children. There is nothing wrong with you as a parent or a human for feeling anxious, frustrated, or sad during this time. In fact, it is normal and expected. It's important to acknowledge to your kids that you too are feeling a whole host of feelings. Follow this up by showing your child how [you can take control of your response](#) when you hit a wall or get into a dark mood. Identify and model positive behavior strategies for yourself by choosing specific positive activities that can improve your mood, notice when you may feel resistant to engaging in helpful behaviors, acknowledge the resistance is due to stress, fake it until you make it, and then notice how good you feel after each positive activity. Naming your feelings, modeling and accepting you may fall short on a given day are important lessons for our children to learn and acquire as they navigate their own challenges in life.

Q: I am struggling to help my elderly parent understand the importance of social distancing. Since she is healthy and active, she sees no reason why she can't visit family or go shopping. She is now angry at her adult children for trying to restrict her activities. How do I help my parent in this role reversal?

A: You may be finding yourself in a role reversal when you are attempting to care for and protect your parent. This can be uncomfortable for you both in the best of times. Attempting to restrict your elderly parents' freedom during this period of social isolation can be especially difficult. Sometimes parents are not ready to listen to directives from their adult children, so perhaps another trusted adult or family member can step in to help with this challenge. Often a sibling, good friend, older grandchild, health care provider or clergy member may be able to support your concerns and help guide your parent. In talking with your parent, be sure to express that this guidance comes from a place of love rather than control, as all adults value their independence at every age. The hardest part of social distancing for older adults is the severe change in their routines and disconnect from loved ones and friends. [Talk with them about action steps](#) you can make together to have a consistent, supportive schedule each week where they feel connected socially while being distant physically. Give them power to choose ways to socially connect that are safe and within their control.

Q: What's a quick self-care strategy for me as a parent during this time?

A: Music is a universal language and healer. Our self-help tip for you this week is to listen to this song: "[Smile](#)" performed by [Lady Gaga](#). Give yourself a moment to smile and close your eyes while you listen.

Week of May 4, 2020

Quote of the Week:

"No need to hurry. No need to sparkle. No need to be anybody but oneself."
- Virginia Woolf

Words from GYFS:

The Glastonbury Youth & Family Services team of clinicians and school social workers have been fielding questions from our community. Since it is likely you are having similar questions during this unsettling time, we thought we would share these questions and responses with the entire community.

If you want to submit a question, please e-mail:

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Weekly Pep Talk Organizers:

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