



# HOW TO BE THE CALMER PARENT YOU WANT TO BE

"BEING A PARENT CAN BRING IMMENSE JOY AND FULFILMENT, BUT THE TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD AND PARENTING ITSELF CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST STRESSFUL STAGES OF LIFE"

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## PARENT GUILT - IT'S REAL!

Do you feel like you are quick to lash out or yell, feel like your emotions are out of control or unpredictable? Feel frustrated by your child's behaviour?

## QUICK TIP

Instead of focusing on your child's behaviour, let's explore what is going on for you as a parent.

**REFLECT**



## REFRAME

### REFRAME YOUR EXPECTATIONS

We need to understand that our children have limited emotion regulation skills and constant cognitive leaps. Self-control skills are not organised in the brain until the age of three and do not mature until the age of six. There is a second major growth spurt of self-control in the brain during adolescence. Remember that our children's brains aren't like ours yet, be open to their bad days, and lack of regulation, and adjust your expectations.

## CENTRE

### SEPARATE YOUR EMOTIONS FROM THEIRS

Our response to our children's emotions may escalate or de-escalate them. When our children experience big feelings, they need connection as their threat system has been activated. Modelling how to manage feelings by centring yourself, remaining calm, actively listening, lowering your voice, getting down to their level and repeating what you have heard reassures them that they are okay and leads them to calm quicker.



## LEARN

### BUILD YOUR PARENTING TOOLBOX

Your emotions are valid and even as parents we are allowed to have big feelings. How we handle our children's regulation difficulties is intertwined with our own regulation. If you have a plan for how to handle these situations, you will feel better equipped and will cope better. Prioritise your own mental health, schedule "you minutes" in your day, ask for and accept help, and practice mindset shifts. Instead of "I messed up, try "We are both learning".

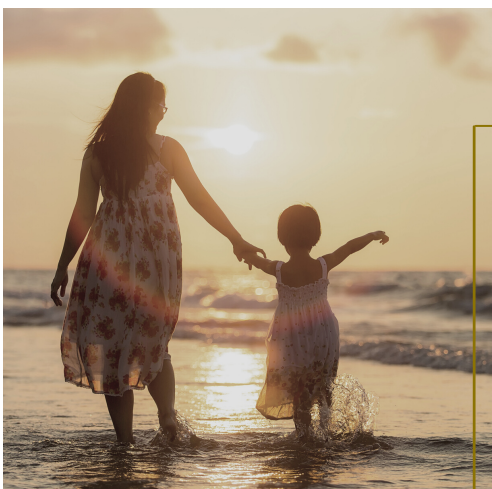




## CALM

### TAKE CARE OF YOU

Being well-rested and ready to face challenges is probably our biggest challenge in modern parenting. Given the demands of daily living and our experiences of “not enough time in the day”, taking care of our own needs as parents often comes second (or not at all).. We can’t pour from an empty cup. Make sure you are practicing self-care daily. Think about what self-care means for you and schedule this in to your day as you would an appointment.



## REPAIR

### KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU LOSE IT

We can be hard on ourselves about parenting mistakes, but it would be abnormal if we didn't ever lose our cool. Notice when you are thinking your mistakes mean you are a bad parent and that if we were always perfect this would teach our children they must live up to perfect regulation always, which is unreasonable. After mistakes, make time to speak with your child, take accountability with self-compassion and express what you would like to change next time.





## NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF LOSING OUR COOL

When we lose our cool our children feel dismissed and do not get the support they need to manage their own emotions. We are modelling unhealthy behavioural responses and sending the message that negative emotions are bad .

## REMEMBER

### UPSET CHILDREN

need their parents  
to share their calm,  
not join in to the  
chaos!

## COREGULATION WHAT IS IT & HOW DO I DO IT?

Parent-child coregulation is the process by which parents and their children regulate one another through their goal-oriented behaviour and expressed affect. We have included some strategies for being calmer:

- Breathe
- Admit that you're anxious or angry
- Challenge your thoughts
- Release the anxiety or anger
- Visualize yourself calm
- Think it through
- Change your focus
- Have a centering object
- Relax your body
- Get some fresh air

