



confident parents confident kids

A site for parents actively supporting kids' social and emotional development

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Posted on March 17, 2020 by confidentparentsconfidentkids

DO YOU HAVE AN EMOTIONAL SAFETY PLAN?



Prepare Yourself and Your Family for Emotional Fires...

Hospitals have assembled incident command systems, or plans for teams to address the extensive health care needs from the COVID-19 pandemic. States are issuing orders for statewide shutdowns of restaurants, schools, events, and even, borders. And we, as families, are encouraged to stay home. While all this flurry of emergency activity is taking place around the world, we are likely to feel ongoing elevated stress even if we are safe and warm in our own homes. So what's our plan? What's our system? We plan for the uncertainty of a fire in our homes with smoke alarms and exit strategies. And it's important since one in four homes will

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RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES DEALING WITH COVID19



Check out these ideas for dealing with stress while your family is home!

PARENTS RUNNING SCHOOL AT HOME?



Here are some tips for setting up your

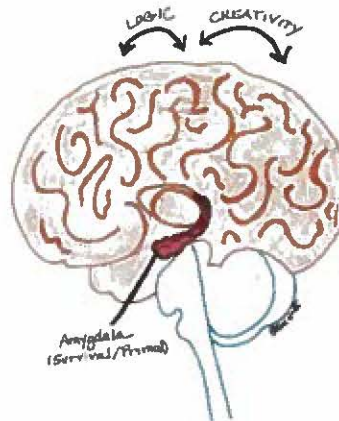
have a big enough fire to necessitate calling the fire department. **But what about emotional fires?**

Every single one of us will be overcome with anger, fear, or anxiety at some point. We'll likely discover our fuses are shorter, our patience less, as we cope with a continuous level of stress and strain during this time. And those moments of intensity are our true tests of character. How will we react when our brains are in fight, flight, or freeze mode? Without thought or planning, we risk lashing out at our loved ones and not only disrupting our routine but also our foundation of trust. And we have to live with the guilt and regret that comes with it. But what if we simply planned for those moments and discussed how we were going to cool down with our families? Particularly during this time of daily and sustained stress because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's worth giving some thought to how we can bring our best selves to most testing times in life.

First, why have a plan?

It helps to have a general sense of how your brain functions under great stress to know why you should have a plan. Anytime you are emotionally shaken from fear, anxiety, anger or hurt, you are functioning from your primal brain, your amygdala. There are chemicals that wash over the rest of your brain cutting off access so that your only functioning abilities are in your survival center. Effective problem solving requires access to the control centers for logic, language, and creativity though these are cut off by those chemicals and cannot be utilized when greatly upset. If, in the past, your plan when your child makes a poor choice that angers you is to come up with a logical consequence on the spot, you will not be capable of that kind of higher level thinking.

This "hijacking" of your brain, as Daniel Goleman author of *Emotional Intelligence* refers to it, serves a critical role. In true survival circumstances, you are able to focus on fighting, freezing, or fleeing from the danger source. But in family life, fighting with words, freezing unable to think, or fleeing out of the door is often not constructive, safe, or practical. Creating a plan for what each member can do when they are in this state of mind and practicing it can prepare all members to act with emotional intelligence during a crisis, big or small.



Creating a Family Plan

Discuss when not emotional. Find a moment when you don't have time pressures to sit down and discuss a plan.

Share your knowledge. Talk about the above information and educate your children and your spouse about how the brain functions in a highly emotional

home environment for learning success!

HOW CAN YOU CREATE A CAN-DO ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL WORK AT HOME?



DON'T FORGET TO USE BRAIN BREAKS TO HELP WITH LEARNING AT HOME...



STICKING TO A CONSISTENT MORNING ROUTINE WILL HELP ALL FAMILY THROUGH STRESSFUL TIMES...



Check out this video short to help you create a smooth morning routine!

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE SIBLING KINDNESS?

Then, I will go (Describe specific place.) _____ to cool down.

Example: I go to my favorite chair in my bedroom. I have heard from others that it's not safe for them to leave the room because a.) They have little ones. b.) They are worried siblings will hurt one another. In those cases, I designate a place in the room I am in or in the case of the siblings, I sit quietly inbetween them in the middle of the floor.

When I get to my cool down spot, I will... (Take how many deep breathes? Then. Write? Draw? Think? Plan?) _____

Example: I take ten deep breathes. This is an essential part of any plan since it removes the chemical from your logical brain so that you have access again. I keep my journal and pen beside my chair if I need it. Sometimes, in the case of a child's misbehavior that I need to respond to upon my return, I think about logical consequences or constructive responses while there. I ask, "What does he need to learn? How can I best facilitate his learning in this situation?"

I will return to my family when... _____

Example: For me, it's when I have cooled down properly and know my next move when I return to the situation.

Now ask your family to write their own plans after they've heard yours. Make sure all know each other's plans. An adult who leaves the room can scare a child and escalate the upset. But if you've already discussed it, then you merely need to remind him of your plan and implement it.

Having a plan can lend safety and security to your family life. It can create a more caring, supportive environment when all know that there is a clear response process for each person when they are at their most vulnerable. After living with and using your family emotional safety plan, you may wonder how you could have lived without it.

A word about sustained crisis...

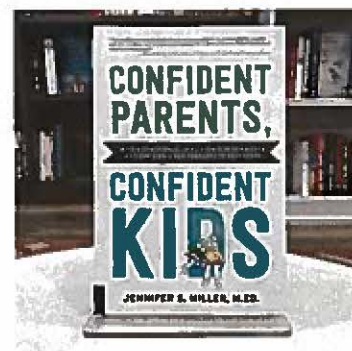
If there are high emotions in your household most days, most of the time, then it may be time to consider outside intervention. Physical patterns begin to set in (as in depression) that require the help of a trained professional. Seeking psychological help is the same as going to your doctor for a physical ailment. There's no shame in being examined for headaches but unfortunately there still is a stigma related to seeking mental health support. In fact, it is the emotionally intelligent person who seeks outside help when he or she recognizes it's time. Though many will not seek it, it may be impossible to go through life without, at some point, needing some mental health intervention. The following are some U.S.-based resources to check out.



SMART HOME MEDIA USE: LIMITING SCREEN TIME



READY TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY AGE AND STAGE?



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[Need Your Help!](#)

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

Has definitions, answers to frequently asked questions, resources, expert videos and an online search tool to find a local psychiatrist.

3615 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, DC 20016

(202) 966-7300

<http://www.aacap.org>

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Healthy Children

Provides information for parents about emotional wellness, including helping children handle stress, psychiatric medications, grief and more.

141 Point Boulevard, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007

(847) 434-4000

<http://www.healthychildren.org>

American Psychological Association (APA)

Offers information on managing stress, communicating with kids, making step families work, controlling anger, finding a psychologist and more.

750 First Street, Washington, DC 20002

(800) 374-2721 or (202) 336-6123 TTY

<http://www.apa.org>

Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)

Provides free online information so that children and adolescents benefit from the most up-to-date information about mental health treatment and can learn about important differences in mental health supports. Parents can search online for local psychologists and psychiatrists for free.

305 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10001

(212) 647-1890

<http://www.abct.org>

Reference

Goleman, D. (1994). *Emotional Intelligence; Why it can matter more than IQ*. NY, NY: Bantam Books.

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INSTAGRAM!

READER ON CONFIDENT PARENTS, CONFIDENT KIDS...

One reader and President of a Mom's Club in Gaithersburg, MD writes, "on first reading...phenomenal! Exactly what I needed right now. I just started checking out books again, feeling like I was doing "something" wrong. I just wasn't feeling great about some of my interactions and felt like I needed a jump start. This blog is putting me

My Emotional Safety Plan

I know that my children learn to manage emotions from my modeling when I am angry and anxious. I know my child will act in the same way I act when they are stressed. Having a plan ready and rehearsed will help me model how I want to teach them the handle their emotions.

When I am angry or have high anxiety, I will say... (keep it short!)

Then, I will go... (describe specific place) to cool down.

When I get to my cool down spot, I will... (take how many deep breathes? Then, write? draw? think? cry? plan?)

I will return to my family when...

I will prepare my family for this (as I would let them know about any new routine) by telling them when we are...(when? where?)

