



A WRDATF Planet Youth Webinar



Supporting your teen when they're feeling socially excluded

A webinar for parents of teenagers

With
Dr Malie Coyne
Clinical Psychologist and Author



Drawing on her clinical expertise, Planet Youth findings, and her own parenting experience, Malie will discuss why belonging is vital for young people and how exclusion can affect self-esteem and mental health. She will share compassionate, practical strategies to help parents strengthen communication, support resilience, and navigate the challenges of peer rejection in today's technology-driven world.

Parents will leave with reassurance, tangible tools, and the opportunity to have their questions answered.

Monday the 10th of November

19.00 – 20.15

Register [here](#) or via QR code at:



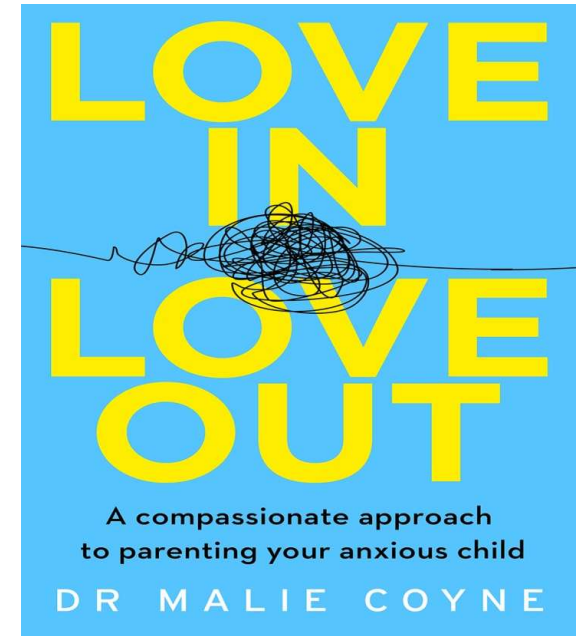


Chartered Clinical Psychologist

U.O.G. Psychology Lecturer

Author "Love in, Love out"

A Lust for Life Schools Programme Psychological Lead



Compassionista

What Planet Youth research tells us

- ▶ **Many teens** report feeling **left out or rejected** by peers;
Girls, more than boys, report higher levels of peer rejection.
- ▶ Those who feel excluded are more likely to experience:
low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and, in some cases, **self-harm**.
- ▶ *Correlation does not imply causation*;
 These experiences often **interact with other stressors** in a young person's life.
- ▶  **"Behind every statistic is a young person who feels unseen or left out."**

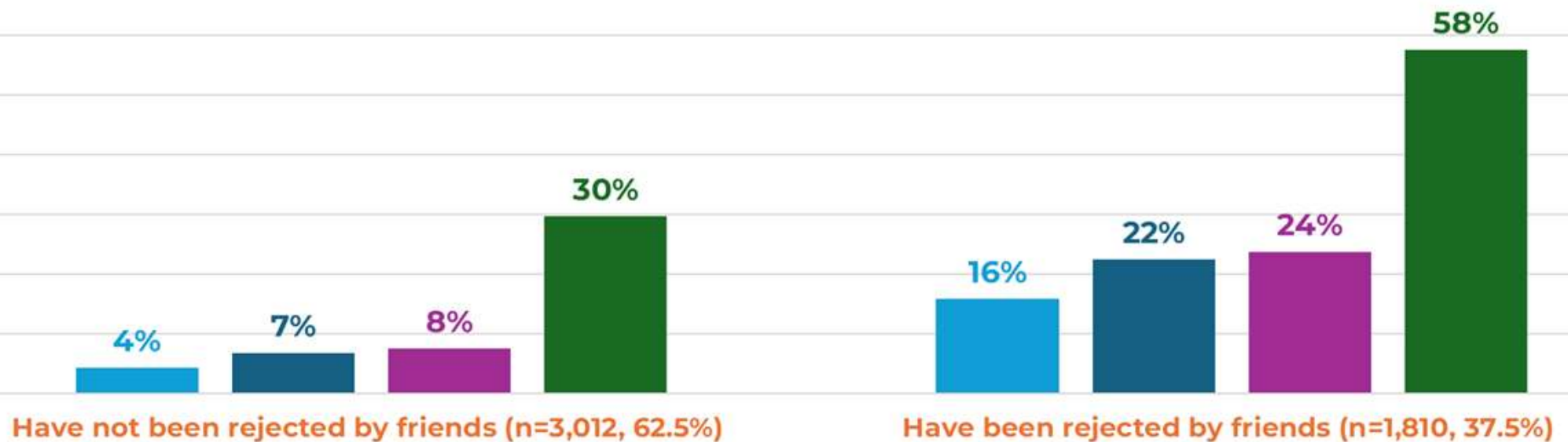
Have you ever been rejected by your friends?

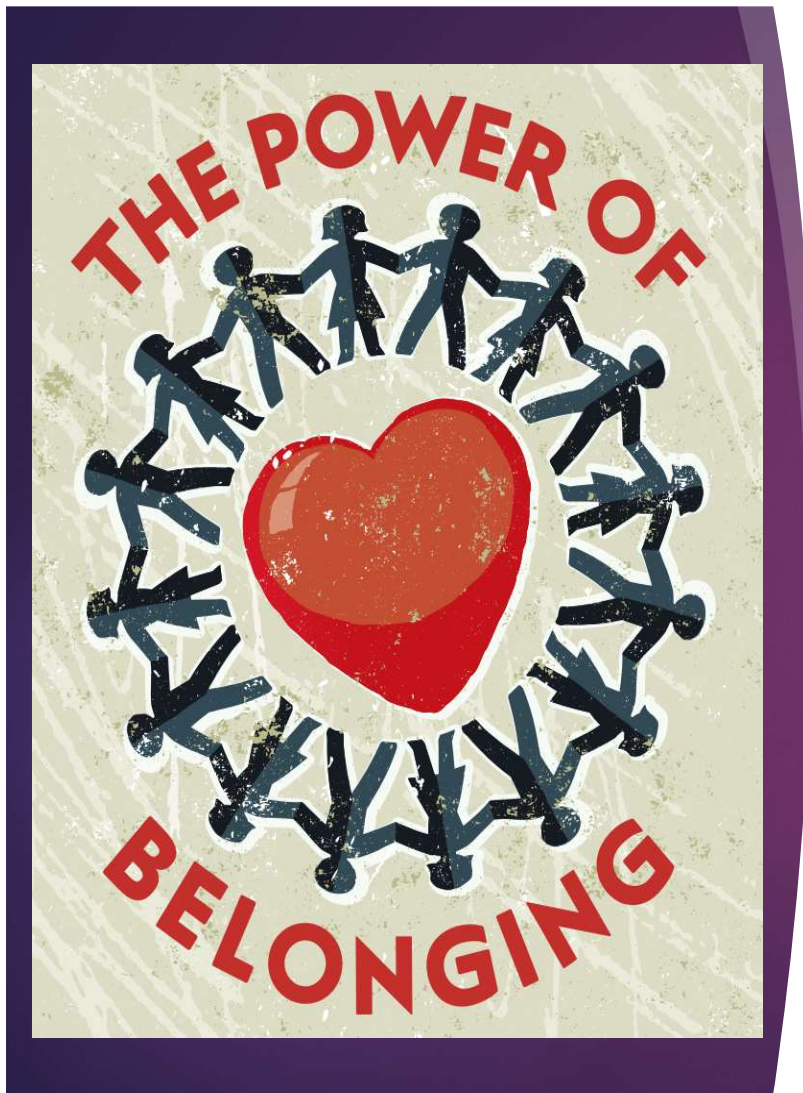
■ Severe score for depression (DASS21)

■ Poor Mental Health

■ Regular Self Harm

■ Low self-esteem score (Rosenberg)





BELONGING gives young people:

- ▶ A sense of **safety and connection** —
"I matter, and I have a place."
- ▶ A buffer against **stress and anxiety**.
- ▶ Confidence to **explore** and **take risks**.
- ▶ Foundation for **resilience** and **emotional wellbeing**.
- ▶ The **courage** to be themselves.

💡 *"Belonging isn't a luxury; it is oxygen for the teenage brain."*



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

💖 Belonging sits at the **heart** of human wellbeing



Inside the Teenage Tricky Brain: Rejection amplified!

- 🔍 **Identity exploration:** *“Who am I?”, “Do I fit in?” & “Where do I belong?”*
- 👁️ **Heightened social radar:** **Hyper-aware of peers, social comparison & FOMO** — they crave belonging but fear exclusion.
- 💔 **Negativity bias on overdrive:** The brain **holds onto rejection more than praise** — *“Velcro for the negative, Teflon for the positive.”*
- 🔥 **Emotions take charge:** Intense feelings; **stress feels stronger**; clear thinking harder.
- 🎁 **Reward centres are supercharged:** **Peer approval and risk-taking** very rewarding.

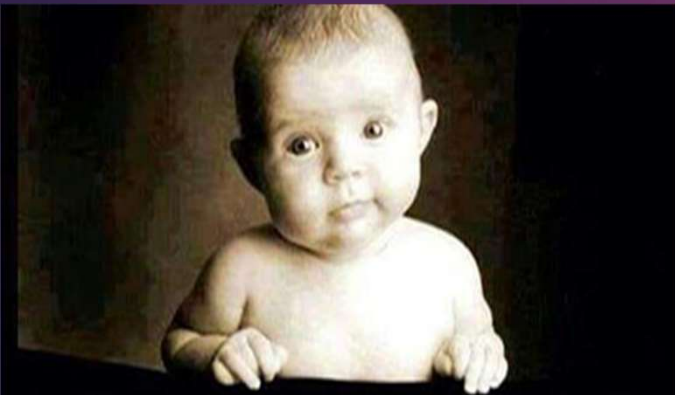


Modern life meets 'tricky brain' ~

Negativity Bias & Social Comparison

Focus on results rather than process. Teens feel less control over their lives

Belonging and Difference



I know nothing of hatred, intolerance, racism, sexism, bigotry, indoctrination, homophobia and prejudice. I don't yet understand things like love, compassion, integrity, tolerance, human decency and truth. For the first and most important formative years of my life all I will know is what you teach me. Choose wisely.

💡 Some young people face extra barriers to belonging:

- ▶ Being of a different **race or culture**
- ▶ Identifying as **LGBTQIA+**
- ▶ Being **neurodivergent**
- ▶ Living with a **disability**
- ▶ Not fitting dominant social norms

💡 *“When difference is celebrated, belonging deepens for everyone”.*

Why rejection hurts so much



- ▶ Brain processes social pain like **physical pain**: Moments feel BIG & are!
- ▶ Can lead to **low self-esteem, anxiety, withdrawal & addiction issues**
- ▶ Cause **overcompensating behaviours** — trying too hard to fit in, masking, or people-pleasing. Stronger impact for **neurodivergent teens** (RSD).
- ▶ Leave **parents feeling helpless** and **young people feeling isolated**.

🧠 *“Our tricky brains are wired to notice threat. For teenagers, social threat is the biggest one. A single moment of exclusion can feel catastrophic.”*

Modern Life: Loneliness & Disconnection



- ▶ **Ripple effect** of peer rejection & **referral increase**
- ▶ Many teens **struggle with in-person communication** because so much happens online.
- ▶ Legacy of **Covid** has amplified this — missed **key social learning** years.
- ▶ Our **“village” has shrunk** — Teens **need help rebuilding sense of tribe** and **shared humanity**.

💡 *“Our teens are more ‘connected’ than ever but feel lonelier than ever. The virtual world often replaces the real village they need — one that models empathy, presence, and care.”*

Peer Exclusion vs. Bullying — When to step in & when to step back

Peer Exclusion

- ▶ Being left out or not invited
- ▶ Can be unintentional or situational
- ▶ Linked to changing interests or group dynamics
- ▶ Short-term and may repair
- ▶ **What helps:** *listen, validate, help them find belonging elsewhere*
- ▶ **Watch out for:** Indirect bullying

Bullying

- ▶ Repeated and targeted behaviour
- ▶ Intentional harm or humiliation
- ▶ Involves a power imbalance
- ▶ Causes ongoing fear or distress
- ▶ **What helps:** *adult intervention (with consent), school help, emotional support*
- ▶ **Needs:** Clear boundaries and protection

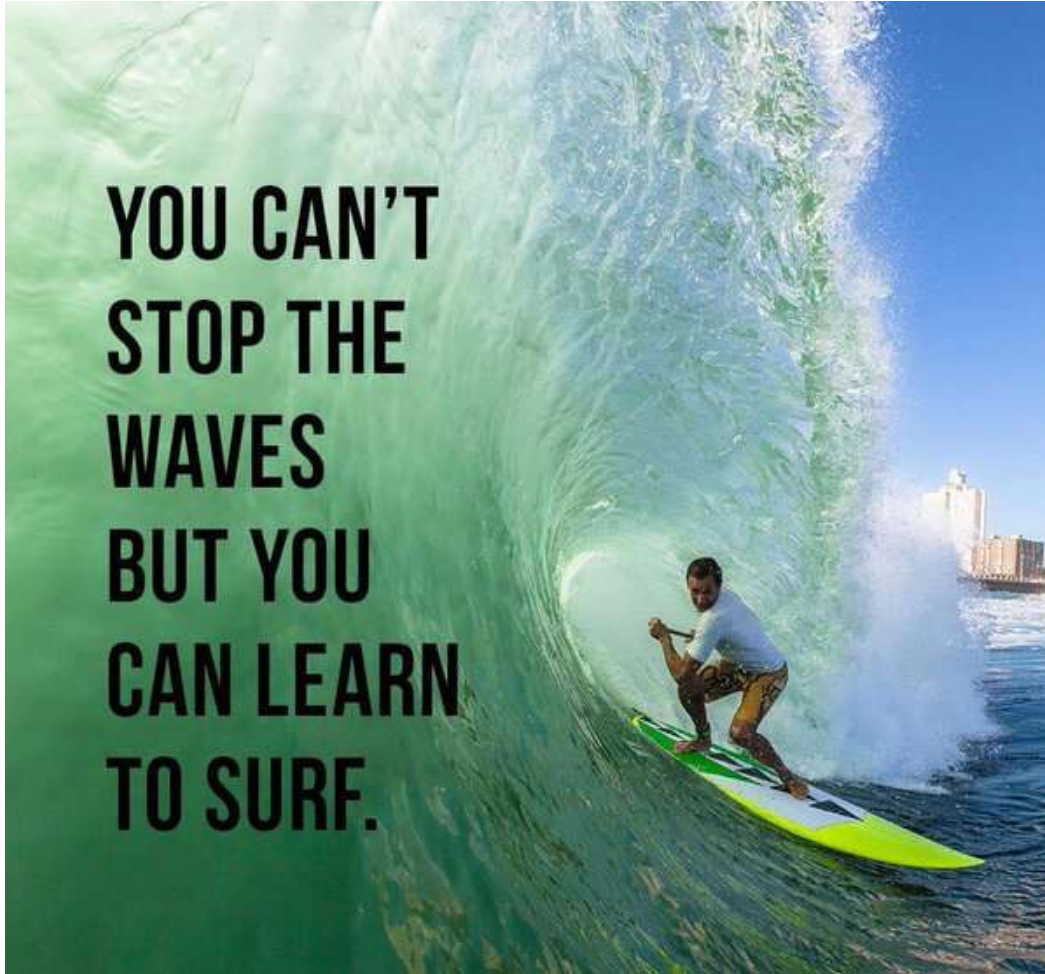


“This is where our compassion as parents really matters. In many cases, we cannot stop rejection from happening

— but we can help our children regulate and rebuild that inner sense of belonging.”



**YOU CAN'T
STOP THE
WAVES
BUT YOU
CAN LEARN
TO SURF.**



When we regulate ourselves first, we give our children the safety and strength to face hard things.

Self-compassion is:



Mindfulness

Recognizing when stressed or struggling, without overreacting or being judgmental towards yourself.

Seeing self objectively



Self-kindness

Being supportive and understanding towards yourself during a hard time, rather than being self-critical.

Non-judgment of the self



Humanity

Recognizing that you are not alone in the mistakes you make or the difficulties you might experience.

We all make mistakes

**The parent-child relationship is
the most powerful mental health
intervention known to humankind**

Bessel van der Kolk

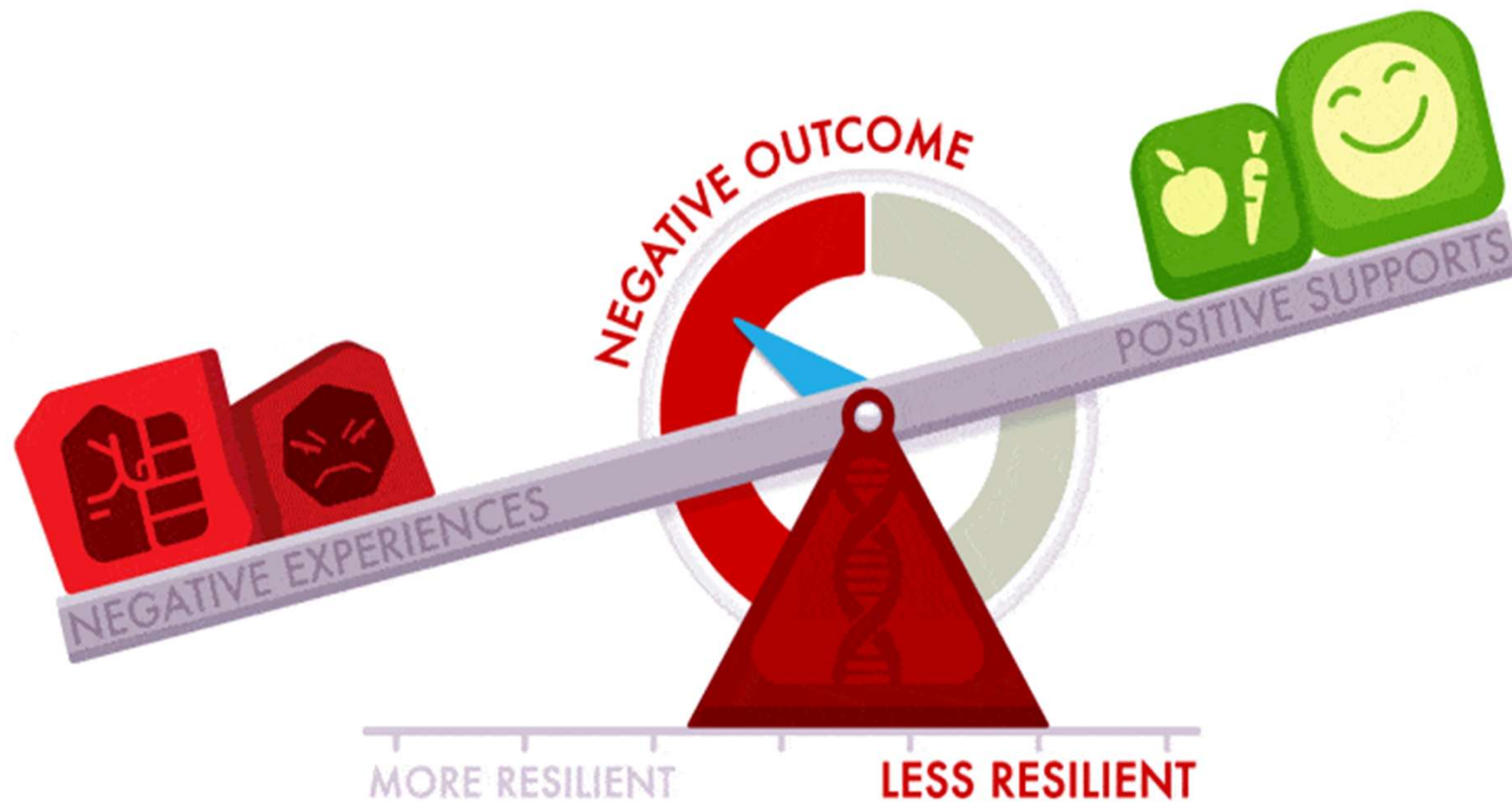


**I CAN'T
KEEP CALM**

I need you NOW

**more than
EVER**

What is 'Resilience'?



EMOTIONS + COMPASSION = RESILIENCE

RESILIENCE

SELF-COMPASSION

Difficult emotions are an **opportunity** to connect with a teenager —
What lies **BEHIND** their feelings and behaviour?

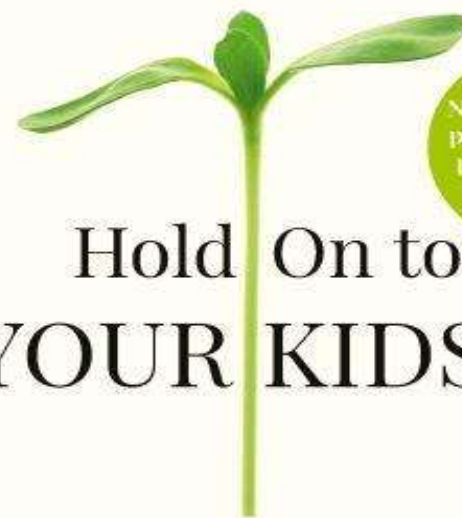
Stress drives teenagers to **seek support and connection**

How caregivers respond has a **significant impact on how they cope**, and the **impact it will bear on them mentally and physically**

Treating ourselves with **compassion** helps us do same for our children



DR GORDON NEUFELD
& GABOR MATÉ



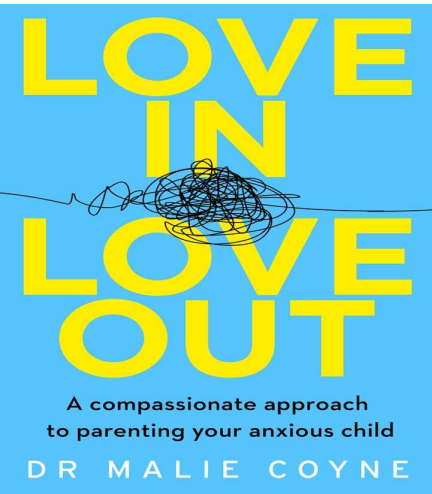
New chapter on
post-pandemic
parenting in a
digital age

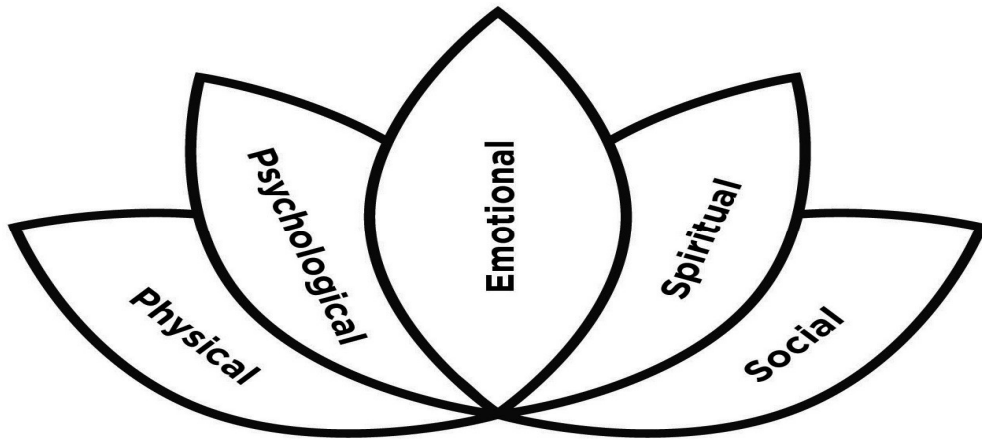
Hold On to YOUR KIDS

Why Parents Need to
Matter More than Peers

'A healer to be cherished'
NAOMI KLEIN





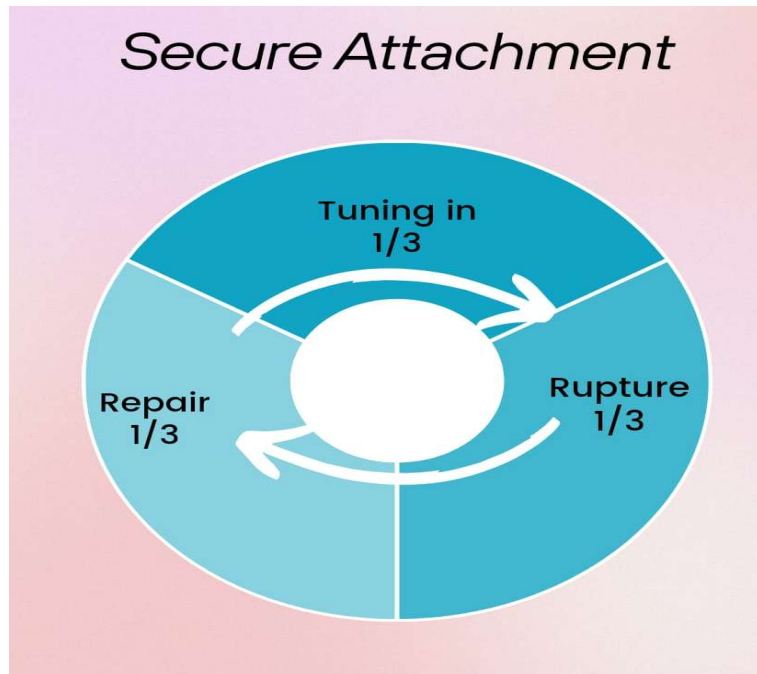


SELF-CARE /
SELF-COMPASSION



The value of working on yourself

Reflective Functioning



VIKTOR E. FRANKL

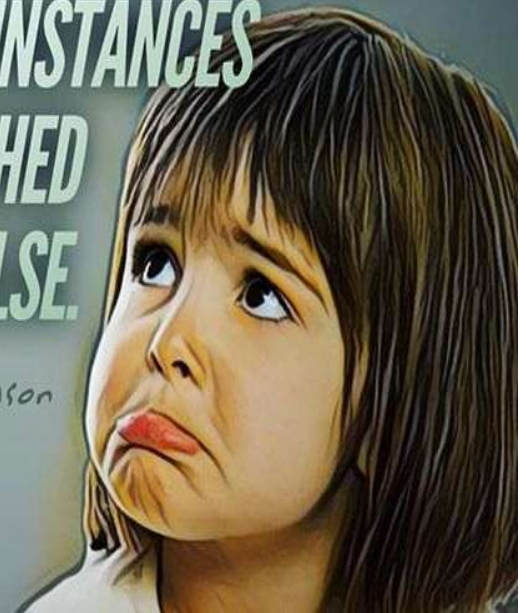
“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

Recognising when WE need SOOTHING



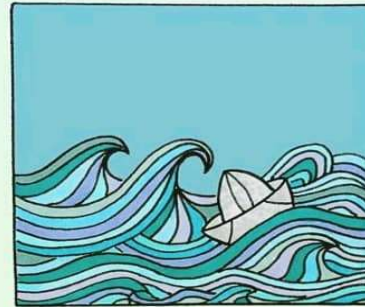
*THE CAPACITY FOR SELF-SOOTHING
IS BORN OUT OF HUNDREDS AND
HUNDREDS OF INSTANCES
OF BEING SOOTHED
BY SOMEONE ELSE.*

Rachel Samson

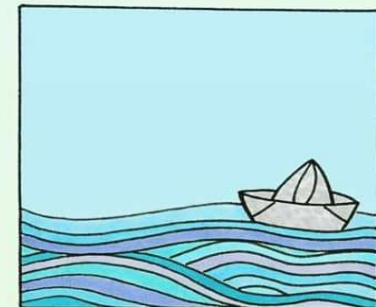


ANCHORING

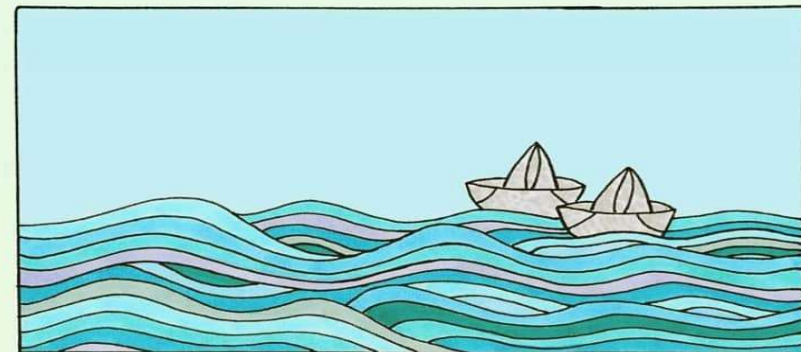
WHEN THEIR STORM



MEETS OUR CALM



CO - REGULATION OCCURS



@kwians62

Cultivating safety to mirror calm



What is happening inside my nervous system?

What tone of voice am I using?

What is my body language communicating?

Do I feel SAFE right now?

“What do I need right now to feel safe?”

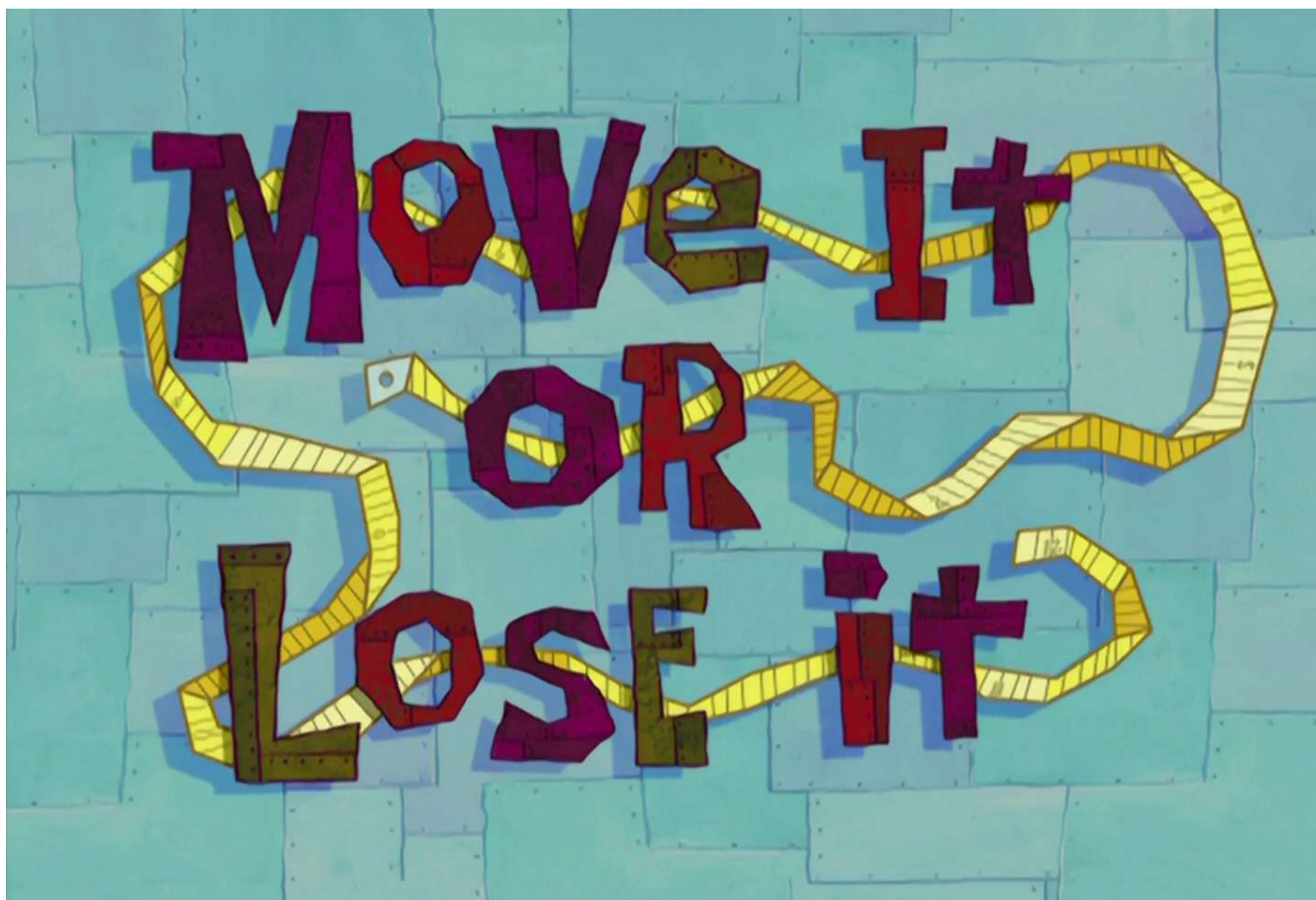
“Do I need to take deep breath, take 5, or call someone for help?”

Anchoring Strategies

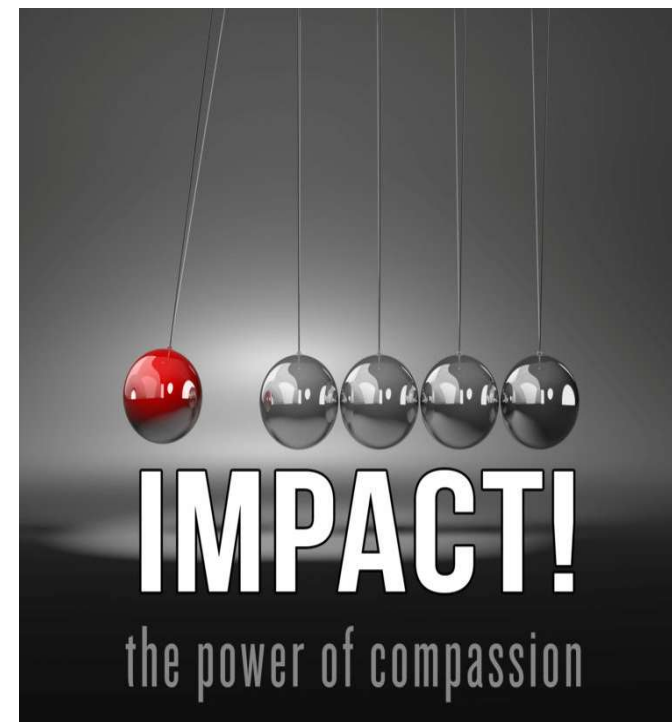


- ▶ **Dragon Fire Breath**
- ▶ **Shaking on Purpose**
- ▶ **The 5-4-3-2-1 Game**
- ▶ **Figure - 8 Breathing**
- ▶ **Butterfly Hug**
- ▶ **Heartbeat Exercise**
- ▶ **Sensory Activity:**
 - Soothing box**
 - Slime**
 - Glitter jars**





FEELING FELT



The 4 S's of Attachment

SAFE

Parents are not a source of fear. Children feel safe and are protected from physical, emotional, and relational harm.

SEEN

Parents are empathetic. They work to understand and respond to their child's inner experiences.

SOOTHED

Parents are present and attentive when their child is distressed. Soothed children learn how to understand and regulate their emotions.

SECURE

Parents are a secure base for their child from which to explore, and a safe haven for them to return.



♥ The **QUALITY** of your relationship provides them with a psychological immune system for threats...



Miscues

BE CURIOUS. NOT
JUDGMENTAL.

BEING A TEENAGER
IS HARD

“Unpacking” a worry



Find Support.
We cannot do this alone.

Pick your Tribe Carefully!

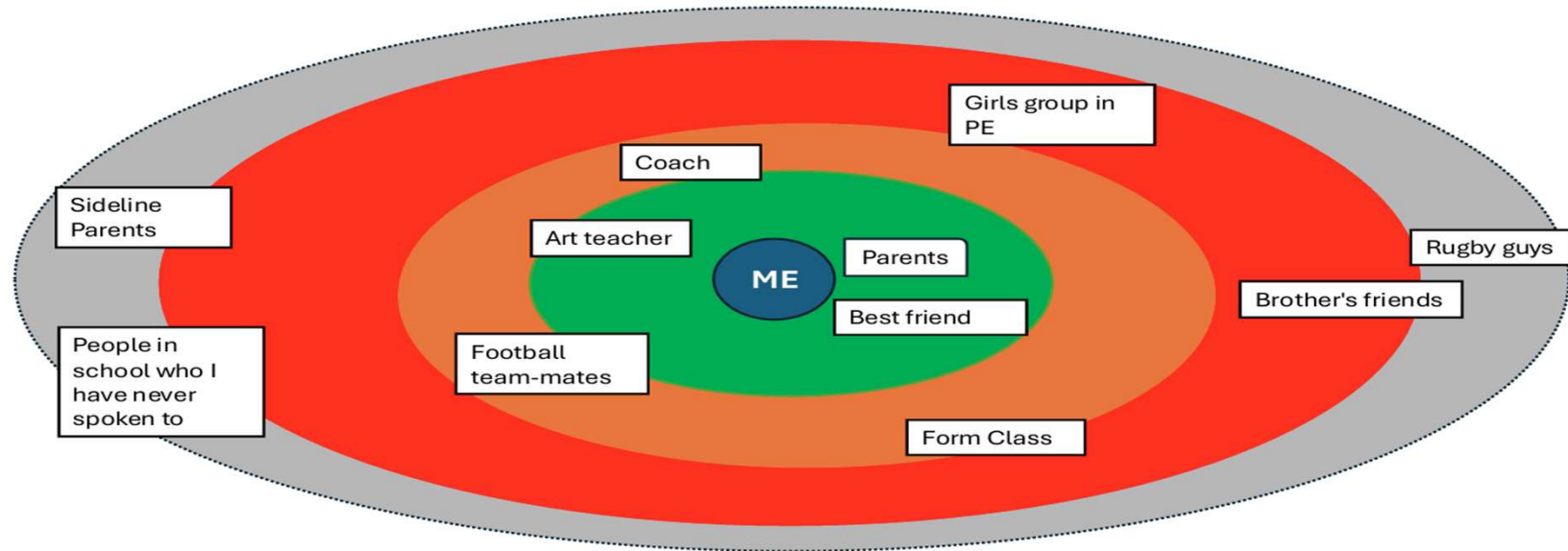


Spoken with Mary Baker

EMPOWERMENT

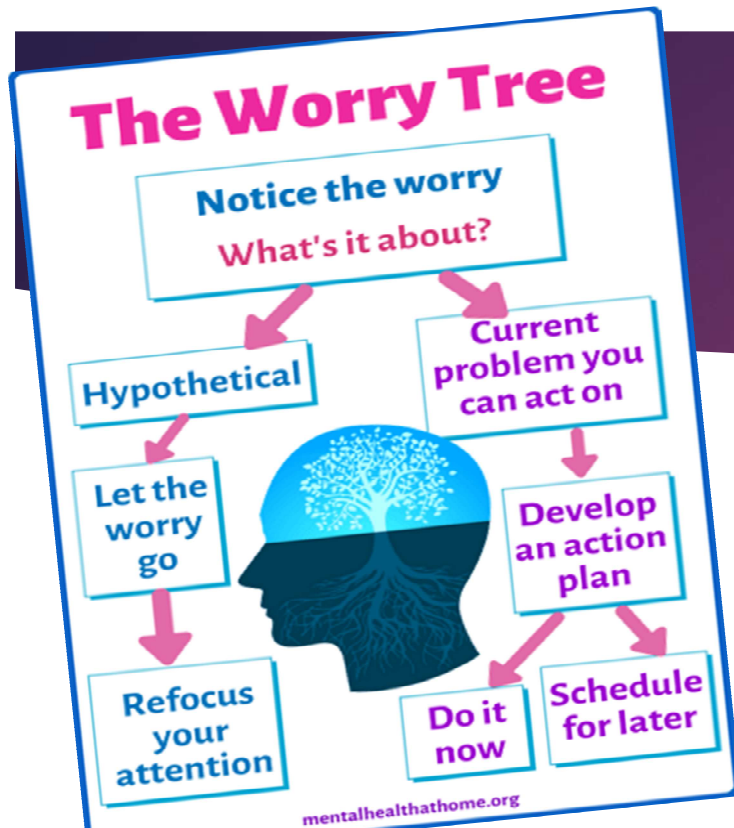


Whose opinions matter? My circles of influence...



MAPPING OUT **WHOSE OPINIONS TRULY MATTER** BUILDS PERSPECTIVE, SELF-WORTH, AND RESILIENCE.

Exploring Thoughts



Distorted Thinking

All-or-Nothing Also called black and white thinking. Seeing things in extremes with no shades of gray. Things are either 100% awesome or 100% terrible with no in-between.	Overgeneralization Using the word "always" when it isn't always. When something bad happens once, you are convinced that it will continue to happen or that it always happens.
Catastrophizing Expecting the worst possible outcome. Feeling like when you make a mistake it is the end of the world. Stuck in a loop of what-ifs. Also minimizing the positive or your good qualities.	Mind Reading Assuming that you know what another person is thinking while also interpreting it in a negative way. Believing that the people around you are thinking badly about you.

My thoughts are just like clouds,
they are only passing by



Lou Lou Rose

SelfLoveRainbow

Silencing your Inner Bully



I am so bad at this



If I keep at it,
I will improve

They will never like me.
I suck.



I'll be myself,
and if we vibe — cool!

Other people's opinions
are right



I can consider other opinions
but should form my own

I can't do that



I just need to spend
time on it to succeed

If they aren't happy,
it's my fault



I am not responsible
for their happiness

| TheMindsJournal

mantra

noun man·tra \ˈmăn-trə also ˈman- or ˈmən-\

: a sound, word, or phrase that is repeated by someone who is praying or meditating

: a word or phrase that is repeated often or that expresses someone's basic beliefs



Helping Teens Build Their Sense of Community

It
Takes a
Village



- ▶ Teens need **many safe adults**, not just parents, to feel seen and supported.
- ▶ A **wider network** protects mental health and builds resilience.
- ▶ Encourage **shared activities** – creative projects, clubs, sports, volunteering, pets.
- ▶ **Be an ally**, but also allow **their space**.
- ▶ Celebrate **kind mentors** — teachers, coaches, relatives, friends
- ▶ **Model being a ‘villager’**: Show empathy, reach out & include others
- ▶ **Remind them: “You don’t have to be liked by everyone to belong somewhere.”**

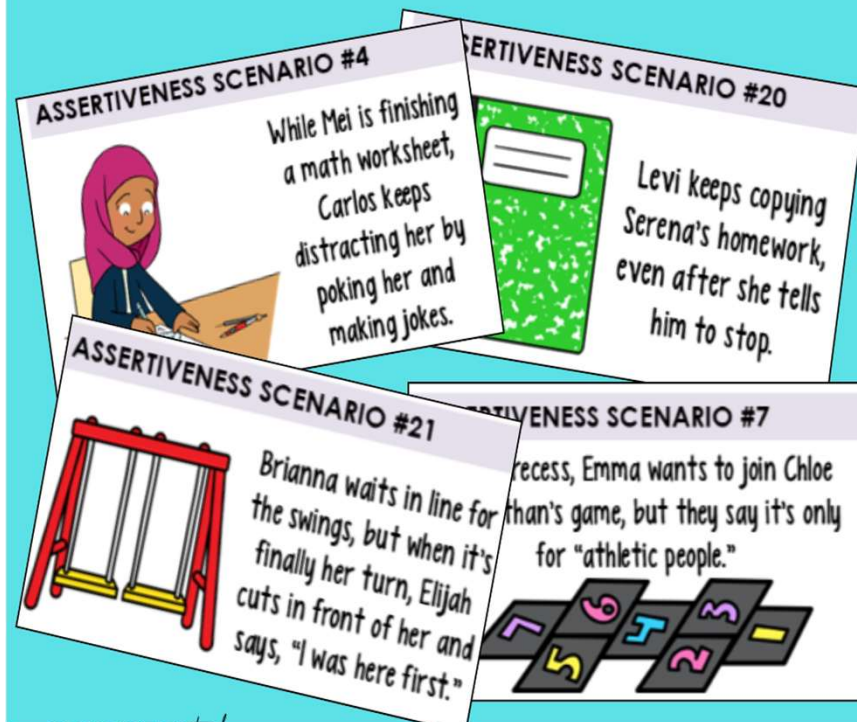
Role-Playing Difficult Situations



“Play is the
rehearsal space
for courage.”



ASSERTIVENESS SCENARIOS ROLE PLAY



MEANT TO BE

excellence honesty trust growth achievement
work life balance
rules integrity quality service
faith openness
conduct collaborate personal growth
accountability commitment correctness
consistency

Core values

Achieve
Independence.





PARENTING

Perfection isn't possible.

Be **GOOD ENOUGH**
and learn more
every day.

3 Pillars of 'Good Enough' Caregiving

1. Learn to trust your **gut instinct**
2. Let go of the **fallacy of perfection**
3. **Get to know yourself** as a carer and **prioritize self-compassion**





Case example:

****Ella's, age 13**

Choosing calm over Rescue



Mum's first instinct was to drive there and rescue Ella, but she made a choice to:

- ▶ **Pause** before reacting: Stay calm and compassionate
- ▶ **Check in quietly** and regularly during the week
- ▶ **Help Ella recharge** with a trusted friend

Mum stayed steady — *In that steadiness, Ella found courage.*

💡 *“Her mum felt torn, but she listened and respected Ella's wish to stay.*

By choosing calm over rescue, Mum showed trust, which helped Ella feel safe enough to face it.”



When our children feel left out or rejected, it's tempting to jump in and fix it, but what they need most in that moment isn't our solution, it's our steadiness.

Our calm becomes their courage.

**** Question:**

When my teenager feels excluded, how can I be the calm and connection they need most?



1800 111 888

yourmentalhealth.ie

Information Line

1800 111 888

SUPPORT



Believe in
children
Barnardo's

IS^{PC}CC
Childline

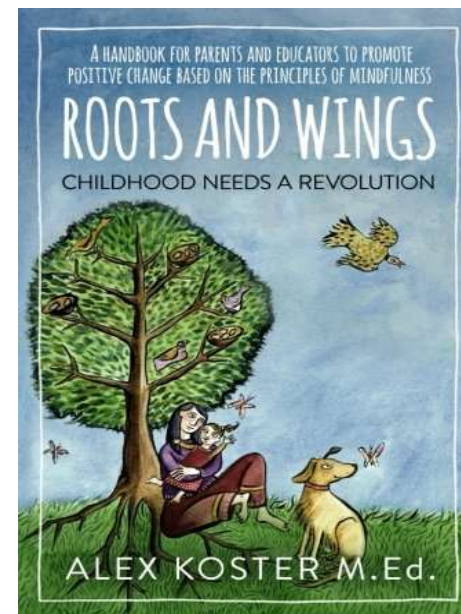
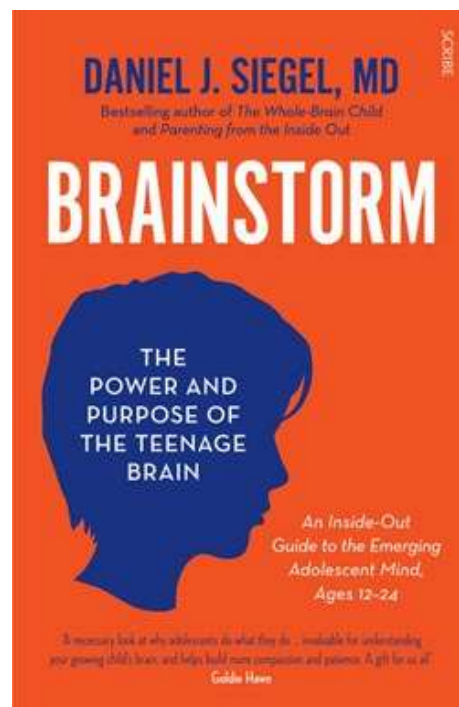
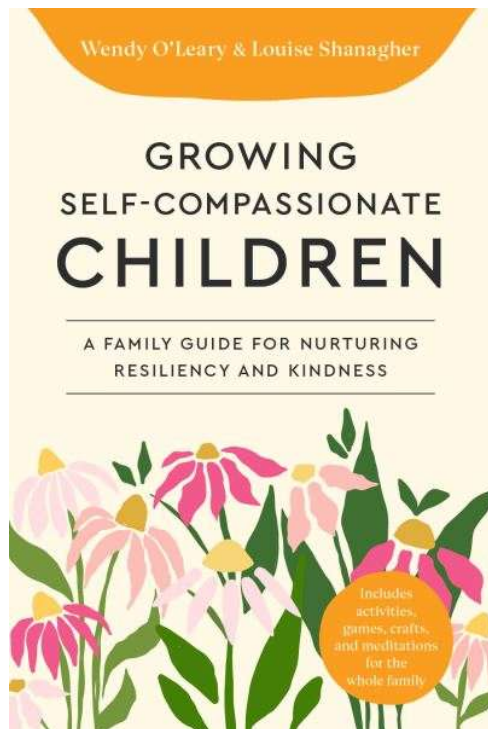
1800 66 66 66

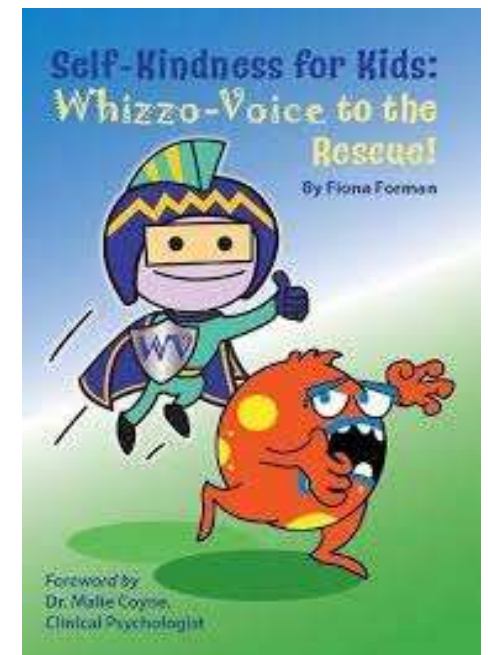
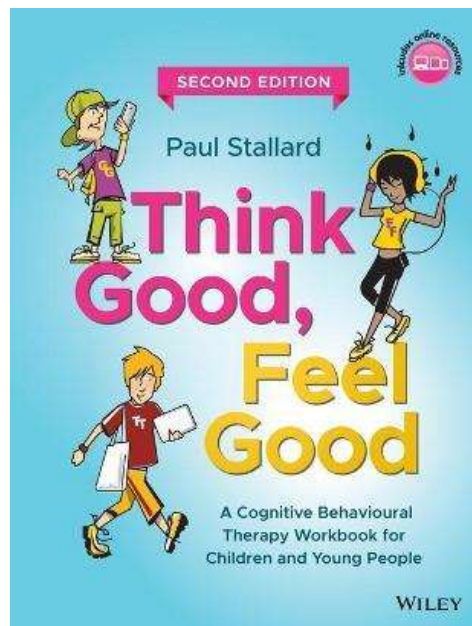
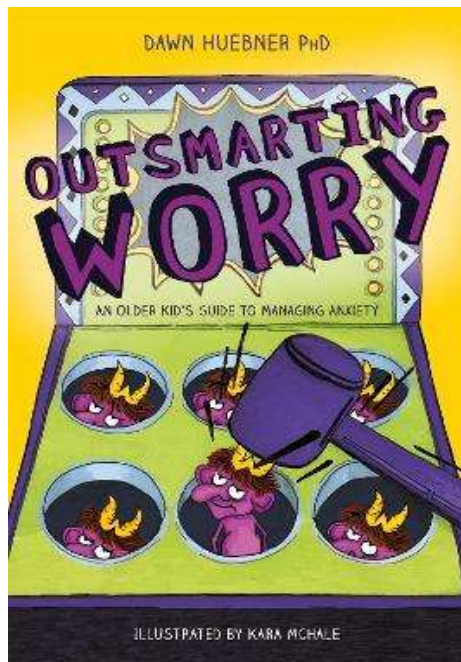
- ▶ Close family / friends
- ▶ GP check / Public or Private Referral
- ▶ Counsellor / Psychotherapist
- ▶ Youth / Parenting organizations



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

JIGSAW
Young people's
health in mind





“Our calm is their courage.”

www.drmaliecoyne.ie

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A compassionate approach
to parenting your anxious child

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Young people's
health in mind

MINDSPACE
young people's health matters... MAYO



Bí Cineálta

Procedures to Prevent and Address
Bullying Behaviour for Primary and
Post-Primary Schools

June 2024



ispcc

parentline
01 873 3500



spunout



FSS an Iarthair agus an Iarthuaiscirt
HSE West and North West



- **Drug and Alcohol Family Support** – free, confidential support for family members impacted by substance use
- **Jigsaw** - free therapy and expert mental health support to children and young adults in Galway and Roscommon. www.jigsaw.ie
- **HSE Under 18's Addiction Counselling** - drugs.services@hse.ie
- **Mindspace Mayo** - Mindspace Mayo is a free & confidential support for young people aged 12-25. www.mindspacemayo.ie
- **Parentline** Parentline is a national, confidential helpline that offers parents support, information and guidance on all aspects of being a parent and any parenting issues. www.parentline.ie or 01 8733500
- **Discovery and Recovery Colleges** - facilitate workshops on mental health and wellbeing in the local community and in schools. Every workshop is co-produced with young people. www.discoverycollegewest.com
- **WRDATF Parent Hub** – connecting you to information and services on drug and alcohol use in the west of Ireland. [WRDATF | The Parent Hub](#)
- **ISPCC** – www.ispcc.ie
- **Family Resource Centres** – www.familyresource.ie
- **No. 4 Youth Service, Galway city** – www.no4.ie
- **Youth Work Ireland Galway** – www.youth.ie
- **Foróige** – www.foroige.ie
- **Malie Coyne** – www.maliecoyne.ie
- **Support Me** – www.supportme.ie
- **Planet Youth.** – www.planetyouth.ie
- **HSE Parent Matters podcasts** – www.drugs.ie/parents





WRDATF DRUG & ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK 2025

November 10th to 14th



A WRDATF Planet Youth Webinar



The importance of sleep for our teenagers

A webinar for the parents of teens

With
Lucy Wolfe
Sleep Consultant and Author



A webinar for parents that explores the importance of sleep, the reasons behind typical sleep challenges, and how parents can practically support their teenagers to understand and prioritise their sleep.

Thursday the 13th of November

19.00 – 20.15

Register [here](#); or use the QR code



WRDATF Drug & Alcohol Parent Hub

Introduction & Walkthrough
For those who support young people & families



Date: Tuesday 11th November

Time: 3pm

Register for this webinar: <https://www.wrdatf.ie/training-awareness-week.php>



WRDATF DRUG & ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK 2025

November 10th to 14th



ESCAPELINE
Preventing Child Exploitation

Target; Test; Hook; Trap:

How can we prevent exploitation
of young people into drug crime?

Date: Tuesday 11th November

Time: 1pm

Register for this webinar: <https://www.wrdatf.ie/training-awareness-week.php>



NEURODIVERSITY & SUBSTANCE USE

INCLUSION BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING

The WRDATF invite you to join is for this short webinar on Neurodiversity and Substance Use as part of its Regional Drug & Alcohol Awareness Week 2025

When it comes to substance use and substance use problems, the risks associated with the ADHD profile are fairly well known, but those associated with the autistic profile have only begun to be explored. Both areas will be discussed in this short presentation, and some further sources of information suggested.

Guest Speaker: Eoin Stephens

The presentation will be followed by Q&A

12TH NOVEMBER
3PM TO 4PM
REGISTER HERE
[HTTPS://WRDATF.IE/TRAINING-AWARENESS-WEEK.PHP?id=34](https://www.wrdatf.ie/training-awareness-week.php?id=34)

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Eoin Stephens (BA Psychology, MA Cognitive-Behavioural Counselling, MAACP, MACI) has more than 40 years experience in the fields of Counselling, Psychotherapy, Mental Health, Lecturing/Training, and Intellectual Disability, providing leadership in such areas as Autism-Informed Therapy, Addictive/Problematic Behaviours, & Counselling/Psychotherapy Education. Eoin's practice now primarily focuses on working with Autistic Adults, or those who feel they may be autistic.