



RELATIONAL PRESENCE

8-Week Group
Parent Program



www.relationalparenting.net

Session 1

WELCOME

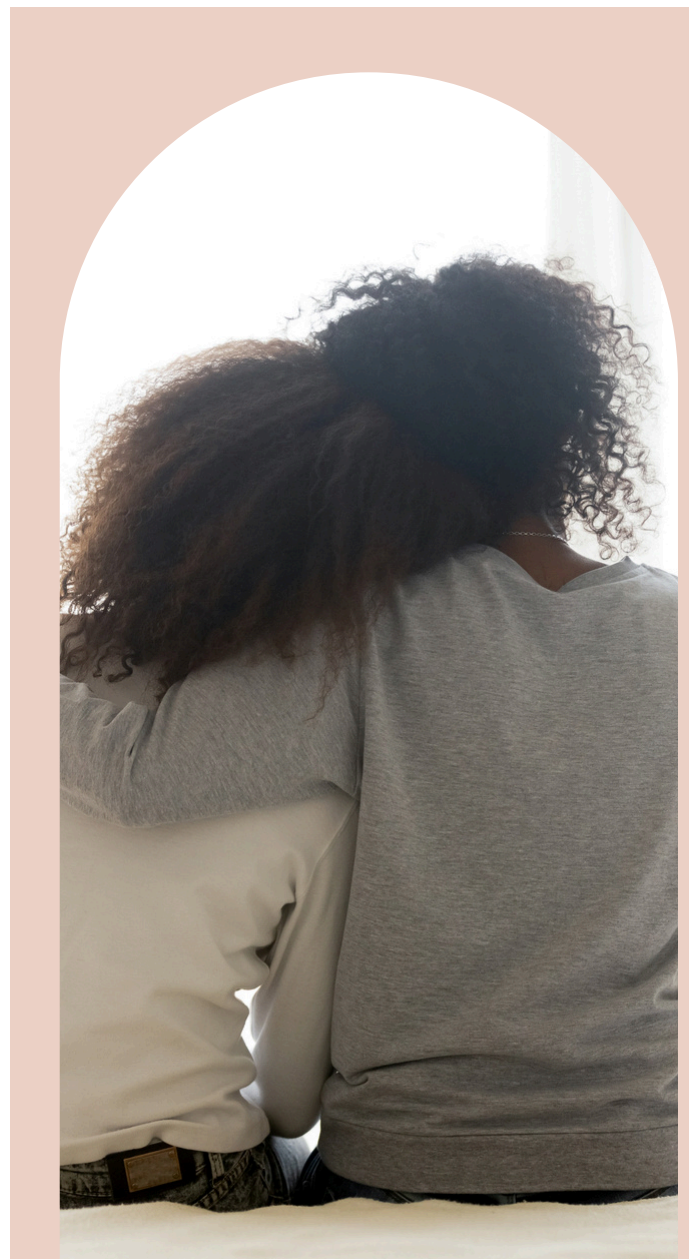
ABOUT RELATIONAL PRESENCE

Relational Parenting is a practical, compassionate approach designed to help parents navigate challenging behaviours while staying connected to their child. It's grounded in a model called Non-Violent Resistance (NVR), which has been used across the world to support families experiencing defiance, anxiety, or aggression. Rather than using punishment or rewards, it teaches parents and carers how to take calm, meaningful action—without escalating or retreating.

Originally developed by psychologist Professor Haim Omer, NVR was inspired by peaceful forms of resistance—like those used by Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.—and adapted for the family home. It helps parents stand firm in their values, resist harmful behaviours, and reclaim their presence in the relationship, even when things feel out of control.

Relational Parenting builds on this powerful foundation. It's about showing up with both love and limits, strength and sensitivity. It gives parents tools to protect what matters most—connection, safety, and a sense of calm presence in the face of chaos.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO
WORKING TOGETHER AND
SUPPORTING YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY



CONFIDENTIALITY

FACILITATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

We will keep your personal information confidential and secure because this is:

- A legal obligation
- Something we must do under our professional codes of conduct
- Is a professional obligation

We will only break your confidence if we think you or someone else is at risk of harm.



PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITY

You'll be talking about your family to other people in the program and hearing about their situations. You're welcome to share anything you've said about yourself outside the group, but you aren't allowed to share other people's information outside the group.

When discussing the sessions outside the group, don't use other people's names or say anything that could identify them or their children.

STATEMENTS OF INTENT

FACILITATORS

As facilitators we will try to:

- Be open and honest during all activities
- Encourage diversity in group work
- Provide the opportunity for equal participation
- Present ideas clearly
- Explore solutions to difficult problems
- Encourage everyone to participate in exploring solutions to difficult situations.



PARENT/CARERS

As participants we will:

- Agree to the program confidentiality statement and expectations
- Share our individual fears, concerns, hopes, and expectations
- Be open to new approaches to family issues and consider new ideas and skills even when they seem difficult to put into practice
- Stay with the group until the end of the program



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR



BATTLE OF THE BRAIN

Children (and adults) are wired with different internal voices—one driven by immediate needs and impulses, and the other shaped by empathy, values, and long-term thinking. The more problematic a child's behaviour, the more the impulsive voice is winning in that moment—but the thoughtful, caring voice is still there, just overruled or silenced.



THE PAIN OF BEING SEEN AS 'WRONG'

Shame is a powerful emotion rooted in our evolutionary need to stay connected and accepted by others. When we feel exposed, inadequate, or judged, our brains react instinctively to protect us. Many behaviours we see in children and adults—aggression, avoidance, defiance, withdrawal—aren't signs of not caring, but shields against the painful experience of feeling like we're not enough.



THE NERVOUS SYSTEM TAKEOVER

When emotions run high, the brain's survival system takes over—shutting down the thinking part of the brain and triggering instinctive reactions like fight, flight, or freeze. In these moments, children (and adults) aren't being difficult or defiant—they're neurologically overwhelmed, and their ability to reason, empathise, or problem-solve temporarily goes offline.

Session 1

SHIELD OF SHAME

The shield of shame is what children use when they feel exposed, judged, or not good enough. Instead of showing vulnerability, they cover it up with behaviours like defiance, denial, aggression, or withdrawal. It's not that they don't care—it's that caring feels too painful in that moment. The shield steps in to protect them from the sting of shame.



And it's not just kids who use a shield. Parents do too. We snap, justify, shut down, or walk away—not because we don't care or are giving up, but because shame whispers that we're failing.

BATTLE OF THE BRAIN

MY CHILD'S NEGATIVE VOICES

These are the voices that want to control or do what feels good in the moment, no matter what. These voices say anger, manipulation, avoidance or ignoring are an effective and justified way to get immediate needs met. They push a child to lie, lash out, withdraw, or avoid, especially when they feel overwhelmed, ashamed, or unsafe.



MY CHILD'S POSITIVE VOICES

These are the voices that don't want to act in angry or unhelpful ways. They want to do the right thing and they want a strong, healthy relationship with you.

Have ever heard your child express a desire to do the right thing? Have they promised to try, even though they didn't see the actions through? Have they ever apologised, even if they did it again?

That's their positive voices.

Session 1

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM TAKEOVER

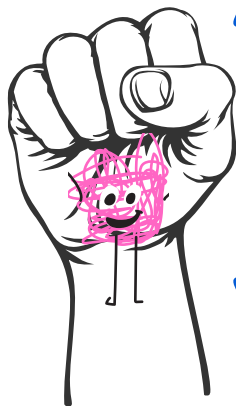
- When emotions run high, the thinking brain (prefrontal cortex) disconnects.
- The survival brain (fight, flight, freeze) takes over to protect us.
- This is called "flipping the lid"—the moment we lose access to logic, empathy, and self-regulation.
- It can look like: yelling, slamming doors, shutting down, running away, or saying things we don't mean.

(Adapted from Dr. Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain)

WHEN WE'RE CALM

Lid connected

CONNECTED



THINKING BRAIN

Information for
problem solving
The person we want
to be

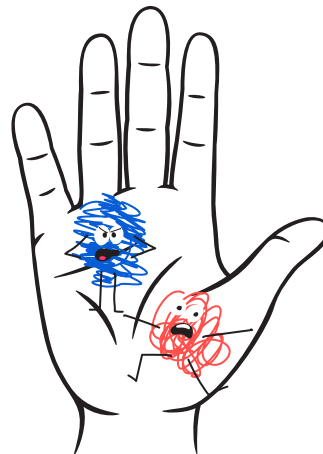
Focus on survival
Fight, flight, or
freeze

EMOTIONAL BRAIN

WHEN WE'RE DYSREGULATED

Lid disconnected - flipped

DISCONNECTED



WHEN MY CHILD FLIPS THEIR LID:

WHEN I FLIP MY LID:

Session 1

TAKE HOME TASK

- Observe your child's behaviour through the lens of what you've learned in this session.
 - Notice moments that might reflect the shield of shame, signs of the battle of the brain, or times when your child may have flipped their lid.
- Also notice how you respond to your child's behaviour

NOTES

Session 2

PARENTAL PRESENCE

Parental presence is the quiet influence you have on your child—even when you're not in the room. It's what helps them pause and think, “What would Mum or Dad think?” or “What’s the right thing to do here?” That internal voice becomes their compass, guiding choices in your absence.

This presence grows through calm connection, clear values, and consistent action. Over time, your child begins to carry your care and expectations inside them.



Except life gets in the way of parental presence. External pressures—like work, exhaustion, and family demands—can limit our energy and calm. Internal barriers—like anxiety, trauma, or a harsh inner critic—can make us doubt ourselves, lose confidence, or avoid boundaries.

That’s why this program isn’t about being perfect—it’s about finding your way back to what matters most, one step at a time.



PARENTAL PRESENCE

What do I want to stand for as a parent? (e.g. respect, compassion, persistence, accountability, calm)

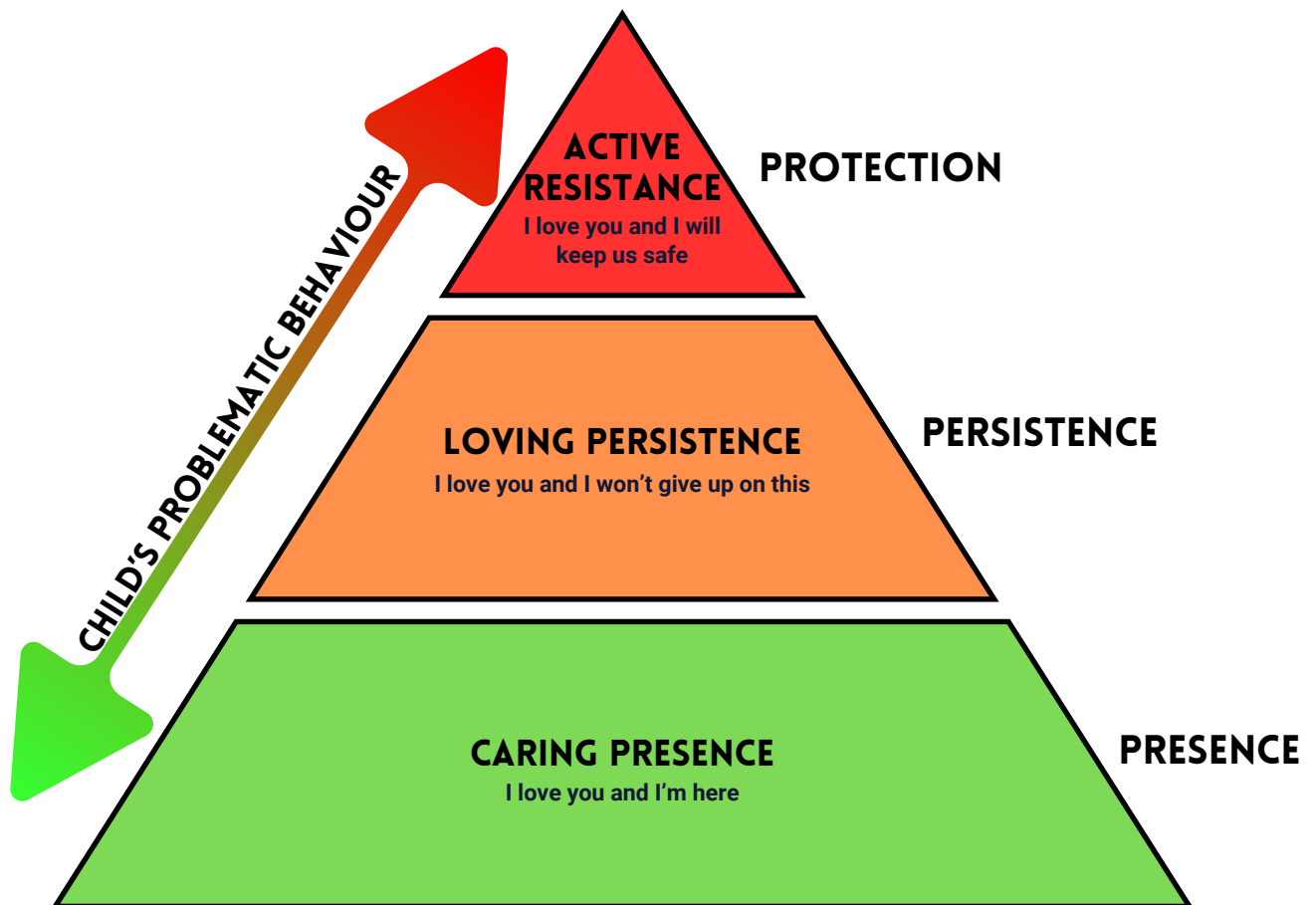
What do I want my child to learn from me—about life, relationships, or themselves?

What gets in the way of showing up the way I want to (external barriers and internal barriers)?

What am I already doing well when it comes to being present or standing for what matters?

THE PRESENCE PYRAMID

The Presence Pyramid is a simple guide to help you grow your influence in your child's life, in a way that fosters connection and gives you tools for healthy boundaries.



Each level reflects a different kind of presence.

A deeper level of presence.

If your child's behaviour becomes more life-limiting, you move up the pyramid—starting with relationships and communication, growing into calm consistency, and, when needed, taking brave, visible action.

CARING PRESENCE

T I E R

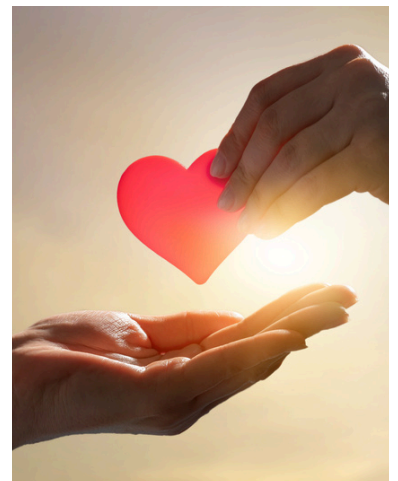
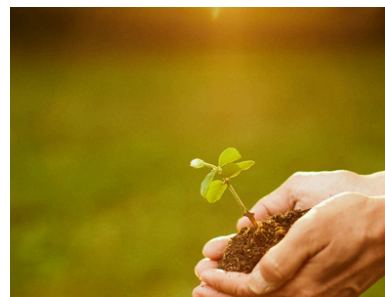
01

THE FOUR C'S

Caring Presence is the emotional anchor you offer your child—the steady sense that you're there, no matter what. It's built through small, consistent moments that say, "You're safe, seen, and loved—even when things are hard."

Caring Presence is actioned by the Four C's:

Connect
Communicate
Clarify
Coach



Session 2

COMMUNICATE

Communication is how we connect with our kids. It's not just about solving problems or getting them to open up—it's about building a bridge.

And that can be hard, especially if your child tends to shut down, snap back, or say nothing at all.

That's why communicating with presence isn't about getting a response. It's about showing up, consistently, with calm curiosity. It's saying, 'This matters to me. You matter to me.'



WHY TIMING MATTERS

Trying to talk in the middle of a meltdown is like trying to read a map in a thunderstorm. The thinking brain is offline, and nothing gets through.

Instead, look for calm, everyday moments—when the nervous system is settled and defenses are down. A drive in the car, brushing the dog, or sitting side by side can all become opportunities for meaningful dialogue.

Sometimes the best talks happen when you're *not* making eye contact.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS

What would you change
about today if you could?



What's something you wish
adults understood better?



If your feelings had a colour
right now, what would they be?



What helps you feel calm
when you're upset?



When you said/did __, what
were you hoping would happen?



THE GOAL ISN'T TO GET ANSWERS

It's to build a relationship where talking is safe.
Every small conversation is a step in that direction.

Session 2

COMMUNICATE

IF YOUR CHILD IS ANGRY OR AGGRESSIVE

1

- What's something that usually helps you calm down when things get intense?
- Are there any feelings you find hard to talk about?
- When you're feeling upset, what's something you wish I'd do—or not do?

IF YOUR CHILD IS ANXIOUS OR AVOIDANT

2

- What's the hardest part about it for you?
- What do you think your worry is trying to protect you from?
- If your fear had a shape or colour, what would it be like?

IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT DEVICE USE

3

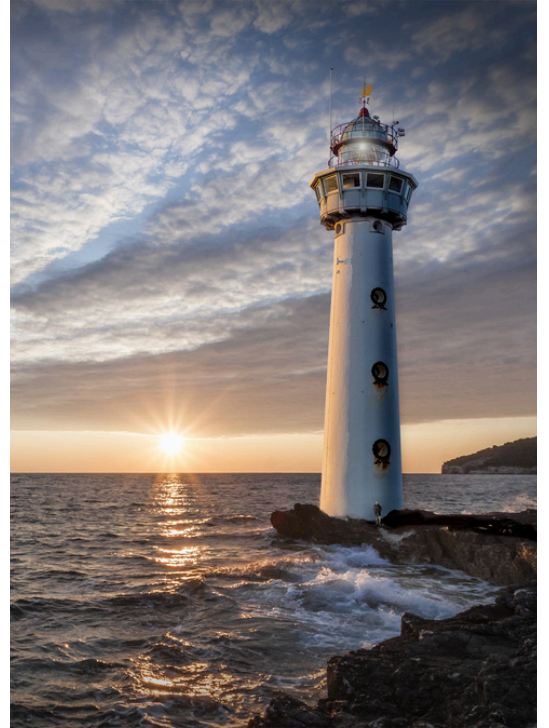
- What's your favourite thing about being online?
- What's something you've seen lately that made you laugh?
- When you've been online for a while, how do you feel afterwards?

CLARIFY

BOUNDARIES THAT MAKE SENSE

Clarify is about helping your child understand what matters in your family—and why. Just like routines help children feel safe by creating predictability in their day, clear boundaries create safety in the relationship.

Boundaries tell your child, “Even when things feel out of control, I’ll stay steady.” When expectations are calm, consistent, and clearly communicated, children feel more secure—and parents feel more confident holding the line.



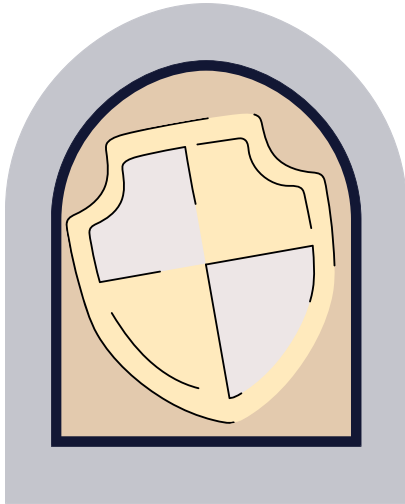
YOUR FAMILY VALUES

At its heart, Clarify is about grounding rules in values. When you say, “In our family, we speak kindly,” or “The Sloans are honest,” you’re not just setting a rule—you’re giving your child a sense of identity and belonging.

It turns expectations into something meaningful, not just mandatory. And when conflict inevitably comes, your child knows those expectations aren’t random or reactive—they’re rooted in something deeper: who your family is, and what you stand for.



YOUR FAMILY FRAMEWORK



OUR FAMILY SHIELD

A symbolic and creative way to represent your family's core values.

- Choose 3–5 values (e.g. kindness, respect, courage).
- For each, write or draw what it looks like in action.

E.g. “Respect: We listen without interrupting.”

OUR FAMILY CODE

A mission statement about the kind of home you want to build.

- Write 3–5 “In our family...” statements.
- Use them often to explain and reinforce ground rules.

E.g. “In our family, we speak respectfully—even when we're upset.”



OUR FAMILY COMPASS

Your values become a guiding direction for decision-making.

- Pick 4 compass points (e.g. Kindness, Respect, Responsibility, Safety).
- Use them to talk through tricky situations with your child.

E.g. “Let’s check this against our compass—was that kind? Was it safe?”

CLARIFY

1.

GET CLEAR YOURSELF

Take a quiet moment to reflect on what matters most to you as a parent. What values do you want your family to stand for, especially in the hard moments?

Choose 3–5 core values that reflect your hopes for your family. (e.g. Kindness, Responsibility, Respect, Courage, Honesty)



2.

DEFINE THE ACTIONS

For each value, write down what it looks like in everyday family life. Make it simple, practical, and real.

“Kindness means we don’t call names.”

“Responsibility means we clean up our own messes.”



3.

BRING YOUR FAMILY IN

Once you're clear, invite your child or family to help shape it. Ask for their input. Add their language. Create it together—so it feels like something you all own.

Display your framework somewhere visible. It becomes a reference point when things get tricky.



4.

REMIND WHEN IT MATTERS

When things go off track, gently refer back to the values you chose:

“I know you're angry. But in our family, we speak respectfully—even when we're upset.”

“What would responsibility look like here?”



Session 2

VALUES & ACTIONS

Below are examples of values and actions to use or adapt.



KINDNESS

- Speak to others in a way that feels good to them
- Notice when someone might need help and offer it



RESPECT

- Treat people, belongings, and spaces with care
- Listen and respond as if the other person's words matter



HONESTY

- Tell the truth, even when it's uncomfortable
- Own up to actions instead of blaming others



RESPONSIBILITY

- Do what you've agreed to do
- Take care of your own things and follow through on commitments



COURAGE

- Try again, even when you feel nervous or unsure
- Speak or act in ways that do what's right, not just what's easy



GRATITUDE

- Acknowledge when someone has done something kind for you
- Express appreciation with words or actions



COOPERATION

- Work with others instead of against them
- Be willing to compromise or take turns



FAIRNESS

- Share time, space, or resources fairly
- Let others have an equal voice in decisions



PERSEVERANCE

- Keep trying, even when something feels hard or boring
- Focus on finishing before moving on to something else

MY FAMILY FRAMEWORK

FAMILY VALUES

What matters most to you as a parent, what values do you want your family to stand for? List 3 - 5.











THE ACTIONS

What does each value look like in everyday family life?













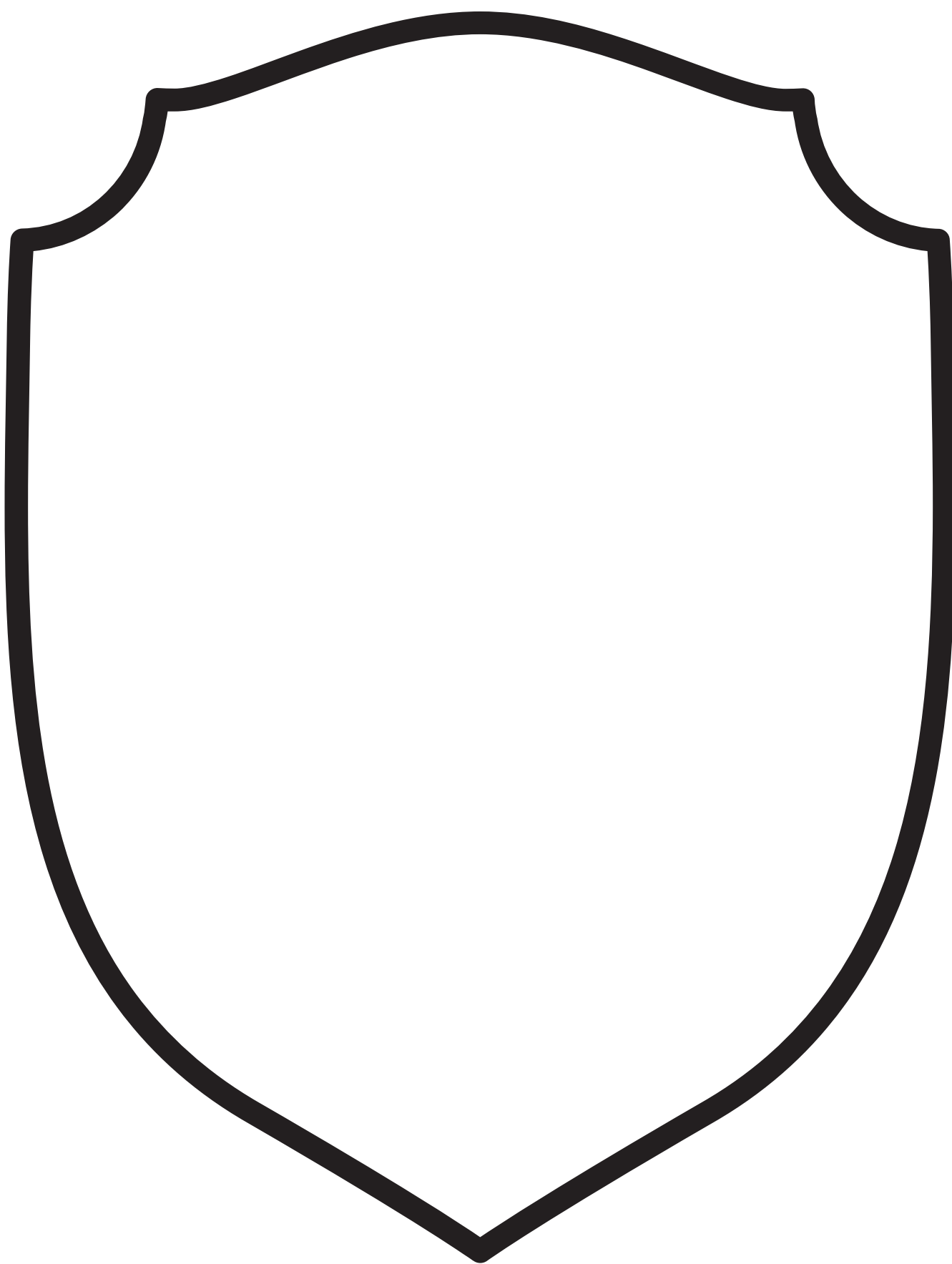




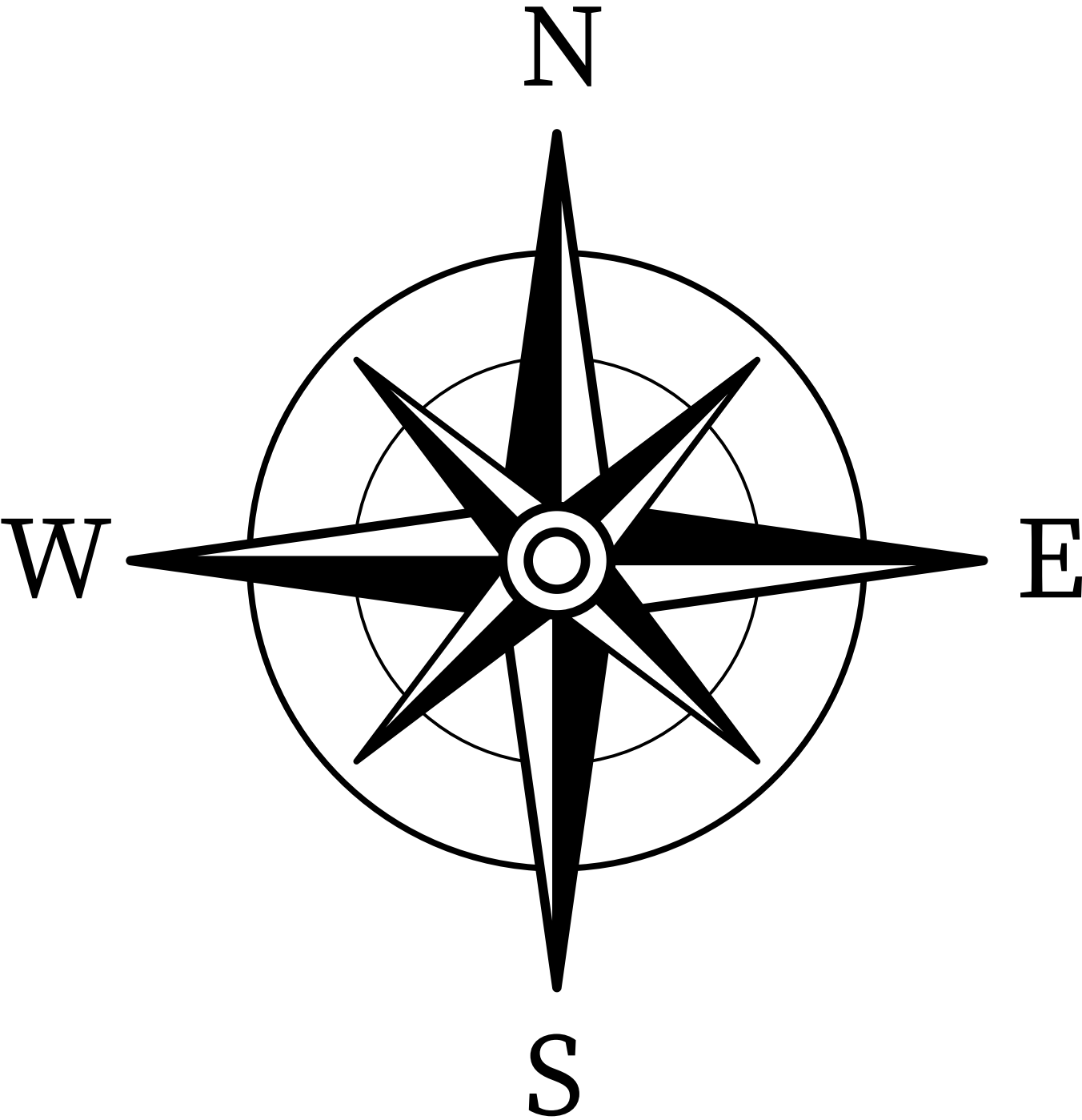












TAKE HOME TASK

- Look for opportunities to ask your child the curious questions you've written down. Notice how your child responds, keeping in mind the measure of success is asking the question, not their response.
- Complete your Family Shield, Code, or Compass with your family.

NOTES

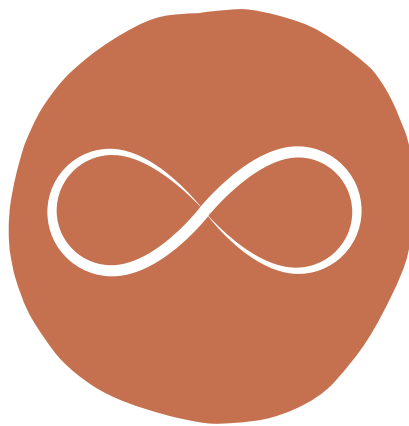
Session 3

CONNECT



HEARTS'

OFFERED FROM A
PLACE OF LOVE



UNCONDITIONAL

NOT LINKED TO
BEHAVIOUR OR OUTCOMES



GIFT

FREELY GIVEN, NO
STRINGS ATTACHED

HUGs are daily moments of warmth, attention, and emotional availability.

Like their name, they come from your heart, hoping to touch theirs.

They're unconditional, and they're a gift.

Actions, tokens, and words you give, without expecting anything back.

This is what differentiates HUGs from positive reinforcement.

HUGs are unrelated to behaviour.

You'll give your child HUGs irrespective of how they've been behaving.

In fact, the worse your child is behaving, the more important it is to do HUGs.

The formula is simple, the more your child acts out or shuts down,
the more you undertake acts of love.

HUGs



SHARED ACTIVITIES

Do something together your child enjoys: a board game, a bike ride, a silly video, craft, baking cupcakes.



VALIDATION

Offer a validating comment like, “I can see that was really hard for you,” or “That must’ve been frustrating.” It’s not agreeing with the behaviour—it’s acknowledging the feeling behind it.

These are offered outside the heat of the moment: “I saw how gently you spoke to your sister earlier. That was kind.” Timing them later gives them more impact—and avoids triggering defensiveness.

CONNECTING COMMENTS



Think: a favourite snack on their desk, a quick shoulder squeeze, a funny meme sent to their phone. These are small, unconditional reminders of “I’m thinking of you.”

CONNECTING GESTURES



HUGS IDEAS

SHARED ACTIVITIES

- Go for a walk around the block or to a local park
- Cook or bake something simple together (e.g. pancakes or toasties)
- Listen to music and share favourite songs
- Watch funny animal videos or a short show together
- Play a card game or a board game you already have
- Draw, colour, or doodle side by side
- Look through old family photos and tell stories
- Lie on the grass and cloud-watch or stargaze
- Do a simple home project together (like rearranging a room or planting something in a jar)
- Sit together with a hot drink and chat

- “I loved spending time with you today.”
- “I noticed how hard you tried—that was awesome.”
- “You make our family better just by being you.”
- “I’m proud of you—not just for what you did, but for who you are.”
- “I really like hanging out with you.”
- “You have such a good heart.”
- “I saw the way you handled that—so thoughtful.”
- “You’re important to me, even when things are tough between us.”
- “You have a great sense of humour—I love your laugh.”
- “I’m so lucky to be your parent.”

CONNECTING COMMENTS

VALIDATION

- “That sounds really hard.”
- “I can see why you feel that way.”
- “It’s okay to feel upset—I’m here with you.”
- “Your feelings make sense.”
- “Anyone in your shoes would be struggling too.”
- “You don’t have to hide how you feel from me.”
- “I get it. I’ve felt like that before too.”
- “You’re not bad for feeling this way—feelings aren’t right or wrong.”
- “Thank you for telling me—I’m really glad you did.”

- Leave a note in their lunchbox or on their pillow
- Make their favourite snack
- Sit beside them while they’re on a device—just to be near
- Offer a quick shoulder squeeze or gentle touch (if welcomed)
- Bring them a warm drink without a word
- Do a small chore for them (e.g. fold their hoodie or tidy their space)
- Let them choose the music in the car
- Save a little moment from your day to tell them about
- Send a kind or silly text—even if you’re in the same house

CONNECTING GESTURES

Session 3

HUGs

SHARED ACTIVITIES

What's one activity my child enjoys that we could do together this week—even if just for ten minutes?

VALIDATION

When was the last time I acknowledged my child's feelings without trying to fix or change them? What feeling might they need me to name today?

CONNECTING COMMENTS

What's one thing my child did recently—big or small—that I appreciated? How could I let them know?

CONNECTING GESTURES

What small act would make my child feel seen or valued today? (Think: a note, a treat, a smile, a song, a meme...)



Children aren't born knowing how to manage big feelings, solve problems, or navigate tricky interactions—these are skills they learn over time, with guidance and support. They won't naturally know how to disengage from their negative voices, regulate shame, or keep their lid down when they're overwhelmed.

That's where you come in.

COACH

Coach is about building your child's capacity by actively teaching emotional and relational skills—like emotion regulation, problem-solving, and respectful communication. It's the steady, supportive presence that helps your child grow in self-awareness, self-control, and confidence to make better choices over time.

You don't need to be a therapist or a teacher to be your child's coach. You just need to be willing to guide, reflect, and walk beside them as they learn.



Session 3

COACH

1

USE STORYBOOKS AS TEACHING TOOLS

Choose books that explore emotions, relationships, or problem-solving. Pause to ask: “How do you think they’re feeling?” or “What would you have done?”

2

HAVE MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

Use curious questions to explore the skills or strategies they need to learn, e.g. “What do you think would help you stay calm next time you feel that angry?” or “When it feels really hard to get started on something, what’s something small you could try first?”

3

CREATE YOUR OWN SOCIAL STORY

Create a book with your child telling the story of them or another character experiencing the challenging situation and coping with it. Read it as often as your child would like.

4

ROLE-PLAY AND PRACTISE SCENARIOS

Practise what to say in tricky situations (e.g. how to stand up for yourself kindly). Use toys or drawings to explore social situations with younger kids. Create social stories - books where your child is the star - of what to do when big emotions come up.

5

TEACH AND PRACTISE CALMING STRATEGIES

Breathing exercises, movement, fidgets, or calming kits. Do it with them—kids co-regulate through you.

6

INVOLVE PROFESSIONALS

Therapy, groups, online or school-based programs, attend parenting programs that give you new tools. Normalise getting support: “Everyone needs help learning new skills sometimes.”

7

USE MEDIA AS CONVERSATION STARTERS

Watch shows or movies together, then ask about characters’ emotions or choices. Pause and ask: “What would you have done in that moment?”

8

MODEL WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO LEARN

Your calm is their blueprint. Show them how you manage mistakes, apologise, or express needs respectfully.

WHAT ARE YOU ALREADY DOING?

Tick any coaching strategies you already use

- ☐ I talk to my child about their emotions after the moment
- ☐ I help them name their feelings
- ☐ I model how I manage my own emotions
- ☐ I read books with my child that explore emotions or friendships
- ☐ I help them practise what to say in tricky situations
- ☐ We have calming tools or strategies in place
- ☐ I ask questions that help them solve problems
- ☐ I've accessed professional support such as a counsellor or a group
- ☐ I use TV shows or movies to talk about feelings or choices
- ☐ Other

WHAT'S ONE AREA YOU'D LIKE TO STRENGTHEN?

Is there an emotional or relational skill your child is still learning? (e.g. calming down when upset, managing friendship conflict, expressing emotions with words)

HOW WILL YOU COACH THESE SKILLS?

Take a moment to reflect on both the suggestions below and your own experience—what's helped your child in the past? What hasn't? Based on that, how will you coach these skills going forward?



Session 3

TAKE HOME TASK

- Extend a HUG to your child this week
- Consider which Coach strategy you could implement this week

NOTES

Session 4

ESCALATION



JOINT ESCALATION

A situation where parent and child get in an argument (e.g. chores). Neither give in and the argument escalates. Your child raises their voice, you raise your voice, your child shouts, you shout, your child shouts louder.



GIVING-IN ESCALATION

The escalation begins the same way.

Your child is defiant, you let your child have their way.

Your child learns that they get their own way if they make enough fuss, which reinforces the pattern.

Session 4

ESCALATION

What do the two types of escalation look like at your home?

Do you tend toward one more than the other?



JOINT ESCALATION



GIVING-IN ESCALATION

LOVING PERSISTENCE

T I E R

02



HOLD STEADY

Loving Persistence is the calm, consistent strength you show if life-limiting behaviour becomes an issue for your child. It's how you hold firm boundaries without yelling, giving in, or walking away.

HOLD is the heart of Loving Persistence:

- H – Hold steady
- O – Organise supporters
- L – Let go of the noise
- D – Draw close again

Session 4

HOLD STEADY

1 PAUSE OR POSTPONE

PAUSE OR POSTPONE

The choice to slow the moment down—so you can respond with intention instead of reacting on impulse. All you can control in this moment is you.

2 DON'T BE DRAWN IN

DON'T BE DRAWN IN

Step out of the power struggle—refusing the invitation to argue, defend, or control, so you can protect connection over conflict. Use a scripted line and stick to it.

3 RETREAT IN TIMES OF ESCALATION

RETREAT IN TIMES OF ESCALATION

Step back when your child is overwhelmed—because in the height of a storm, the only thing to do is wait for it to pass.

4 CALMLY PERSIST

CALMLY PERSIST

Return to the boundary—gently, consistently, and when you're both calm, even if it takes many tries.

Session 4

AUTOPILOT SCRIPTS

I can see you're upset, and I know you can still speak respectfully.

I know you don't think this is fair—and we still need to keep our hands to ourselves.

I'm not going to change my mind so we're going to stop talking about it now.

I love you and I don't want us to fight, so I'm stepping away for now.

YOUR AUTOPILOT SCRIPTS

HOLD STEADY

1

PAUSE
OR
POSTPONE

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

2

DON'T BE
DRAWN IN

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

3

RETREAT
IN TIMES OF
ESCALATION

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

4

CALMLY
PERSIST

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Session 4

TAKE HOME TASK

- Notice any joint and giving-in escalations now that you have an understanding and a language for them.
- Implement any of the Hold Steady strategies you feel comfortable implementing.

NOTES

ORGANISE SUPPORTERS

Supporters can be key in supporting you and your child as your work to build the family you want. They can be a powerful tool in promoting progress and overcoming obstacles. Different people in your life can support you in different ways.

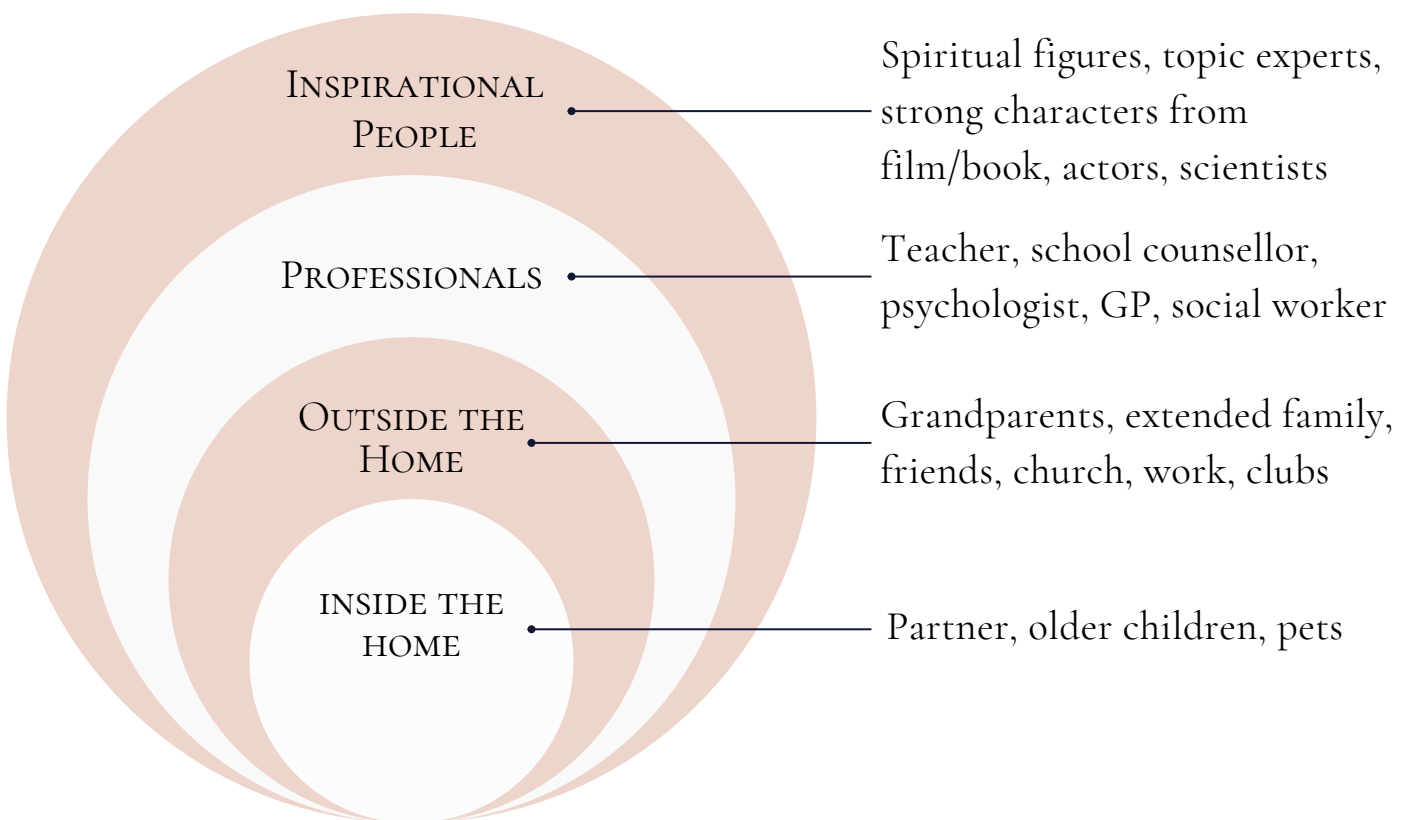


- ✓ **Support you:** someone to listen and encourage as you move forward.
- ✓ **Support your message:** convey to your child you're doing this because you care and because overcoming this is important.
- ✓ **Support success:** reach out to your child when they've achieved success to reinforce progress.
- ✓ **Express caring and concern for your child:** by expressing caring and concern for your child, and confidence in their abilities, supporters can bolster your child's self-esteem and encourage motivation.
- ✓ **Mediation:** supporters can help to pass on information the child finds hard to communicate to their parents.
- ✓ **Minimise disruptive behaviours:** your child is more likely to self-regulate if a supporter is around.

Session 5

SUPPORTERS

Asking for help isn't easy—we worry about being a burden, or feel ashamed that we can't do it all—but reaching out is a courageous act of love. It shows your child that they're worth showing up for, that they belong, and that you're willing to let others stand beside you. So think about who that could be, and let them be a hero in your story.

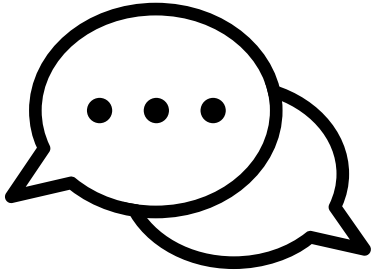


LIST YOUR SUPPORTERS AND WHAT THEIR ROLE COULD BE

Session 5

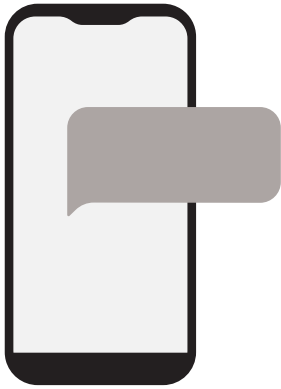
SUPPORTERS SCRIPT

Supporters can talk, call, text, or email



I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED

e.g. I heard last night was hard
and you hit your brother or
I know you didn't go to school
yesterday.



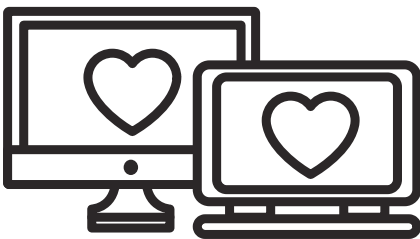
I EMPATHISE

e.g. I know younger brothers can
be really annoying or
I know school is a stressful place
to be.



I BELIEVE IN YOU

e.g. You're a good kid and I
believe you want things to
change. You've got this!



I'M HERE FOR YOU

e.g. I'm ready to help – just let
me know.

LET GO OF THE NOISE

Let Go of the Noise is about choosing what matters most in the moment—because you can't do it all, and you're not meant to. When you focus on one priority instead of every problem, you create space for calm, sustainable progress. It's not giving up—it's letting go of what's not urgent so you can stay steady in what is.

PRIORITISE YOUR ENERGY



Focus your energy on the most critical issues.

REDUCE OVERWHELM



Don't address everything at once.

INCREASES CALM



When you focus on your top priority, it reduces daily conflict.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

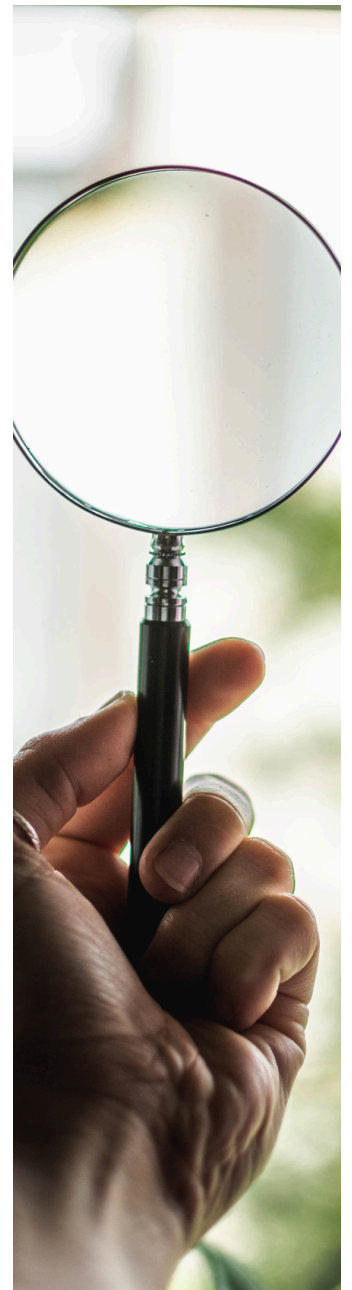


Your child feels less nagged for every behaviour.

SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS



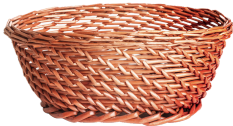
Small successes will build up over time, boosting motivation.



Session 5

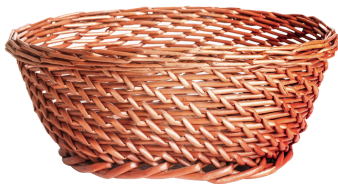
LET GO OF THE NOISE

SMALL BASKET



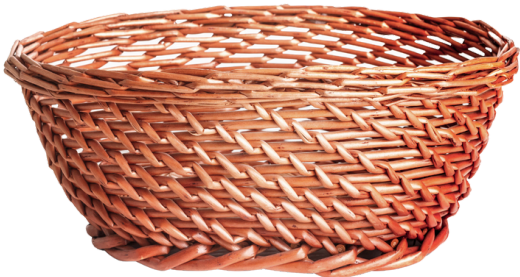
BEHAVIOURS I'M GOING TO FOCUS ON NOW

MEDIUM BASKET



BEHAVIOURS I'LL FOCUS ON NEXT OR AM WILLING TO NEGOTIATE

LARGE BASKET



BEHAVIOURS I'M GOING TO LET GO OR ADDRESS LATER

Session 5

RAINBOW BASKET



Session 5

DRAW CLOSE AGAIN

Draw Close Again is the gentle return to connection after the storm has passed. Holding steady can be hard—for both you and your child—and reconnection is how you remind them they're still loved. A small gesture, a kind word, or a quiet moment together (a HUG) rebuilds the bridge and shows your child that your love didn't disappear during the hard times—it waited.



NOTES

Session 5

TAKE HOME TASK

- Approach the supporters you've identified
- Continue the Four C's of Caring Presence and the HOLD Steady of Loving Persistence

NOTES

ACTIVE RESISTANCE

T I E R

03

THE 5 TOOLS OF PEACEFUL PROTECTION

Active Resistance is how you take a visible, peaceful stand when your child's behaviour is unsafe, harmful, or deeply stuck.

The 5 Tools of Peaceful Protection:

Parental Disobedience

Truce Tokens

Circles of Concerns

The Announcement

The Sit-In



PARENTAL DISOBEDIENCE

Parental Disobedience is a calm, intentional way for parents to break the unspoken rules their child has put in place and maintains the problem—rules like “Don’t come into my room,” or “Don’t turn off the wifi.”

It’s about gently reclaiming your parental presence and your role in keeping your child safe. By showing, “I control me,” you model calm strength and remind your child that their behaviour doesn’t dictate your choices.



MY ACTS OF PARENTAL
DISOBEDIENCE:

For example:

- Entering your child’s room when your child’s present or not
- Following a schedule that’s set by parent/carer *and* child needs
- Using space in the house that your child has claimed as their own
- Reaching out to family and friends for support
- Connecting with your child’s friends
- Limiting access to the internet
- Not providing money if it’s being used for at-risk behaviour

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Announcement is a powerful way for parents to draw a line in the sand—for themselves and for their child. It's a calm, planned statement that makes clear: I love you, this behaviour needs to stop, and I'm no longer facing it alone. It lets the child know which behaviours the parent is focusing on and signals a shift: supporters will be involved, and the parent is committed to stepping out of anger, shouting, threats, and power struggles.

01

FIND THE RIGHT TIME

Find a time when you and your child are both calm. This may be a day or two after a small-basket behaviour.

02

READ THE ANNOUNCEMENT

Read the announcement aloud, then hand them the letter or place it next to them. Don't engage in any argument, debate, negotiation, or lengthy discussion about what was just said. If your child escalates, then HOLD Steady.

03

LEAVE YOUR CHILD TO THINK ON IT

Leave your child to his/her thoughts and avoid discussing the content of the announcement.



ANNOUNCEMENT EXAMPLES

Jax, I love you very much. I love your smile, how much you care about other people, your smart mind.

But some things have been really hard. The anger and aggression toward me over the past couple of years has been painful and tough. It's time for it to change.

The following needs to stop:

- Aggression toward me.
- Not going to school unless you're physically unwell.

Jax, I know this isn't going to be easy but I'm doing this because I love you very much. I believe we can have a happier family and I'm really looking forward to that.

Love you,
Mum



To our beautiful, bright Minecraft king. You are our precious son, you mean the world to us.

But life is not always fun for you or for us and we want to make it better.

We want to help you stop hurting us. We want all the kicking, hitting, biting , pulling hair and punching to stop.

We know that life would be so much happier without all this violence in our life.

So let's work together as a family and make the violence a thing of the past.

We love you with all our hearts.

HEART-ANNOUNCEMENT



I know I've not always been the parent I hoped I would be. There were times in the past when I was unable to protect myself or my children from violence. I wasn't always there for my children because I felt depressed and found it difficult to cope. I know this has affected all of us.

Now things are different and I want to be a parent that my children can respect and look up to. I won't tolerate violent behaviour in our home. I'll do everything I can to change the situation. I promise to stop feeling guilty, as this paralyses me and prevents me being the sort of parent that can make our home a safe place to be.

I love my children very much and I want the best for them.

My Dearest Sally,

I've been wanting to write something to you for a while. I think about the what ifs and my role and would like to share this with you. I regret that I did not see or hear how horribly you were hurting while you were in the first years of High School.

I didn't take strong enough action to protect you or help you change schools to get a better environment or get the help you needed early. It's a blur why I couldn't take the right steps, hear your pain and suffering. I was so used to doing, fixing, solving problems, and struggling to keep life going – work, food, appointments, home - that I didn't take the time to listen closely enough and learn how to be the mom you needed. I'm committed to learning how to be a better parent for you – for the unique and beautiful person you are.

I want to keep working with you, being your mom, so you find wellness and happiness.

Your very imperfect, yet loving Mom

Session 6

YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT

Component	Example	Your Announcement
What you love about your child	Sam, you're an amazing person to be around and we love it when you make us all laugh.	
The problem	Recently you've been hitting your little brother. We all need to feel safe at home and hitting isn't okay.	
Empathy	I know he can be very annoying, especially when you're tired after a big day at school.	
Pledge to resist	Recently I've shouted at you because of this – that wasn't helpful and I'm going to find different ways of helping you and your brother get on.	
Supporters	Dad and I are on the same page with this and also Grandad will help – you know he thinks the world of you and always will.	
Hope	I am saying this because I know that we can make things work better for us all as a happy family. Ben looks up to you and we all see the amazing kid you are.	

TAKE HOME TASK

- Consider whether parental disobedience is an Active Resistance strategy you want to implement this week
- Complete your Announcement, and read it if you plan on using it.

NOTES

Session 7

TRUCE TOKENS

Truce Tokens are small, meaningful actions your child is asked to take to help restore the harm caused by their behaviour. They're not punishments, but opportunities for repair. You invite your child to take the step, and then give them a couple of days to respond. You can involve trusted supporters to help them follow through. And if they refuse, you complete the gesture on their behalf to show that repair still matters, and that you're committed to restoring connection.

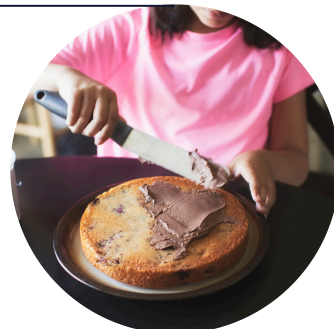


WRITE A CARD

Your child can write a simple card, or you can write the message and invite them to sign it. For more explosive or avoidant children, even cutting out a heart and having them add their name can be a meaningful first step.

BAKE A CAKE

Your child might choose to bake something themselves, or a supporter can help them. It doesn't have to be a cake—it could be a favourite meal or treat for the person who was hurt.



DO A CHORE

Your child might choose to do a chore on their own, or you can suggest one and support them to follow through. It could be something meaningful—like tidying the room they argued in—or something simple, like feeding a pet or putting the bins out.

CLEAN UP/REPAIR THE DAMAGE

If something was broken, thrown, or damaged during the incident, helping to clean or fix it can be a powerful form of truce. Your child might do it themselves, a supporter could help them, or you can assist them to do it together.



Session 7

TRUCE TOKENS

TRUCE TOKEN IDEAS

SUPPORTERS TO HELP WITH TRUCE TOKENS



CIRCLES OF CONCERN

Circles of Concern involve a trusted group of supporters who care about the child and family.

When a small-basket behaviour occurs, the supporters send the child kind, encouraging messages that express both care and concern, while clearly stating that the behaviour must stop.

Messages can be sent by phone, text, email, or letter.

The goal is to show the young person that their parent or carer is no longer alone, and that others are standing alongside them with love, concern, and united boundaries.



WHAT TO DO

1. Choose the supporter/s to be involved.
2. Provide the script for the message (see the supporters script on p. 31).
3. Supporters send the message using the most appropriate format e.g. text, card, email, phone call.
4. Carry on as usual (don't get drawn in to debates or arguments).

Session 7

CONCERNED CALLS & CONCERNED VISITS

CONCERNED CALLS

Concerned Calls are used when a child doesn't return home. The parent or carer makes a series of calls to people in the child's social circles to leave messages of concern and presence. These calls serve help locate the child, show that you're concerned, and remind your child that your presence is still with them, even in their absence.



WHAT TO DO

Make as many calls in your child's social circles as you can. Don't begin with where you believe your child is. The aim is to leave messages:

"Hi, I'm the mother/father of Jenny. I'm calling because I'm very concerned as she said she'd be back by ten o'clock. Do you know where she is?"

If they say *I don't know*: "Do you have any suggestions of who I may call?"

Finish the call with: "I have a small favour to ask. When you see Jenny, could you tell her we were very worried and called?"

CONCERNED VISITS

Concerned Visits are a next step when Concerned Calls haven't led to your child's return. A parent, carer, or supporter visits locations the child is known to frequent—such as a friend's house, park, or hangout spot—asking for them to return home. These visits signal that the adults in their life remain committed, visible, and involved.



WHAT TO DO

On arrival, ring the bell/knock and respectfully say that you've come to take your child home. Say you have no intention of punishing your child but you want them to come with you.

If your child doesn't come to the door, say you'll wait for them (you can ask the parent's permission to wait inside). If you aren't invited to come in, wait outside or in the car.

Stay calm as you wait for as long as you can.

Each call, message, and visit is a statement:
"I was here. I didn't give up on you."

THE SIT-IN

The Sit-In is a calm, non-confrontational response to a small-basket behaviour after an announcement has been made. It involves the parent or carers sitting quietly in the child's space to express presence—not punishment—with a clear message: “We’re here, we care, and this behaviour needs to change.” The goal is to show calm commitment, reinforce hope, and make it clear that the adults are united, steady, and working toward change.

- Enter your child's room when you're both calm and sit nearby.

- Tell your child ‘The hitting has to stop. We’re here to find a solution. Do you have any suggestions?’

- Remain quiet and wait for suggestions. Respond to all suggestions in an encouraging way.

- Remain sitting quietly if your child responds with accusations, demands or threat. You can say “that is not a solution.”

- If your child ignores you, remain for some time (approx. 30 mins), then leave saying, “we need to find a solution.”

- For some children it's too much to expect them to come up with a solution. You may need to be more flexible and creative and generate solutions with them.

- Once a solution has been reached, leave the room saying you'll give the suggestion a chance.

SIT-IN VARIATIONS



THE SUPPORTER SIT-IN

A supporter reaches out the child and either sits in their room or takes them out somewhere. They communicate "I'm here to help you solve this," and explore finding a solution with the child.

THE SIT-IN ON WHEELS

Take your child for a drive. The destination isn't the focus, the time to sit in quiet and wait for your child to suggest a solution is. The drive is likely to be a long one – one to two hours. Driving to a small restaurant/truck stop to share a meal works well.



THE CONNECTION SIT-IN

Sit-ins can be used to strengthen connection. Enter your child's room to simply be with them and communicate the desire to connect: "We're here because we want a better relationship with you." Useful if a child is spending large amounts of time in their room.

Session 7

TAKE HOME TASK

- Continue with Caring Presence and Loving Persistence
- Consider whether any of the 5 Peaceful Tools of Active Resistance are relevant, and to implement them if applicable

NOTES

Session 8

REFLECTION



CHANGES IN MY CHILD

Describe the changes in your child's presentation and/or behaviours, relative to before the group.

CHANGES IN MYSELF

Describe how you think about your parenting today and whether that has changed since starting the group



Session 8

MOVING FORWARD



ADDITIONAL GOALS

Are there any additional goals you'd like to achieve?

MAINTAINING PROGRESS

Most children will test boundaries again—even after progress has been made. What will you do when this happens?



FURTHER SUPPORT

WE WISH YOUR FAMILY ALL THE BEST.

KEEP UP THE AMAZING WORK!



Your school's student wellbeing faculty or the school psychologist



Your GP



Local Child and Adolescent Mental Health services



Local Child and Family Centers



Ask around about psychologists or counsellors



Parent information websites

