



Healthy ways to manage your emotions

Managing our emotions in a healthy way is not always easy. Teenagers are learning to do this as they navigate through life. Having positive role models who show them how to manage their emotions in a positive way is very important for their development.

So, ask yourself these questions. Have you practised good emotional management techniques yourself so your children can see what it looks like and how it works? When talking with your children, do you use 'I' statements, such as:

- I can manage this if I work on the parts that are my fault.
- It's okay that I feel this way and I know that I can work through this situation.

In relevant situations, do you share how you feel with your children and explain why you're experiencing these emotions?

It's important for parents to model and teach their children successful ways to manage their emotions so they will feel better and be more likely to make responsible decisions within their relationships with others.

To help them gain self-awareness, say things like – *I've noticed that you get angry whenever you think something isn't fair. Are you aware of that? Or, I often see you get angry when someone disagrees with you and you feel like you aren't being respected. Do you agree with that?* Choose a time when your child is calm to have these critical conversations.

Believe that your children can take care of their emotions on their own. Give them time to process their emotions on their own. Acknowledge their feelings and give them a chance to talk things through but don't try to 'fix' things. Saying things that over-empathise a situation, such as – *Oh no, that's shocking, you must be devastated, you poor thing* – can give your child a message that it's a bigger problem than they thought.

Let your children know that their emotions are valid even if you think they are overreacting. Adolescents don't always see the real picture and they might draw conclusions that to you seem ridiculous. For example a 15 year old girl who has just been dropped for the first time may say – *"No-one else will ever want to go out with me."* Or *"I'm the only girl at school who doesn't have a boyfriend."* Tempting as it may be to say – *"You're being absolutely silly!"* it's important to avoid saying things that minimise children's feelings.



Tips for your children

1. Breathe and relax.
2. Use positive, realistic thoughts (self-talk).
3. Talk to someone and tell them how you are feeling and why.
4. Exercise or do something else that you love doing to take your mind off the situation for a while, but then you need to go back and tackle it.
5. Look at the problem as a challenge that you can work at and learn from.
6. Decide which bit of the problem you were responsible for and which parts were out of your control.
7. Ask for help if you need it.

