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Compassionate Parenthood



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Parenthood

It is an important duty of a parent to provide a child with security and nurture, as well as to set an example for the child.

A parent must, among other things:

- show the child that the child matters to them
- support the child's sense of security
- teach the child how to express and regulate their feelings and put them into words
- maintain daily routines and schedules



There are many kinds of emotions associated with parenthood. It is commonplace for daily life to feel arduous at times, and a parent may experience feelings of irritation, shame, and inadequacy.



A small child needs the support of their parent. It is important to recall that a parent will also have their own needs and hopes. Parents must look after their own coping. Compassion for oneself helps with parenting.

Compassion for Yourself

Being compassionate towards yourself means treating yourself kindly. It also means showing acceptance of the thoughts and feelings you have. It is important to accept that every human being will have their flaws. Nobody is perfect and there is no rule to never make mistakes.

Compassion for yourself:

- Strengthens your mental well-being
- Increases your happiness and contentedness
- Bolsters communication in a relationship
- Helps cope with challenges and failures
- Cuts down on anxiety, depression, exhaustion, and stress
- Diminishes guilt and shame



Compassionate parents will be more accepting and less harsh towards both themselves and their children.



Practicing Compassion for Yourself

It is possible to practice showing compassion for yourself.



- Think positive thoughts about yourself.
- Do not be too hard on yourself.
- Consider how you think about matters.
- Do not demand too much of yourself.
- Give yourself permission to relax.
- Do not be discouraged if you face issues.
- Speak gently when using your inner voice.
- Frequently give yourself compliments and encouragement.
- Express your opinion and stick to the boundaries you have set.

Compassion for the self enables a parent to cope with difficulty better. A parent with compassion for themselves is able to deal with both their own feelings of disappointment as well as those of their child.

Compassionate Parenthood

Compassion in a family is an important asset. It is important to be able to speak frankly. Each family member deserves to be listened to, supported, and helped. Encouragement and thanks are small but important acts.

The compassionate parent

- Takes into account the child's emotions
- Fosters closeness with the child
- Is kind to the child
- Accepts the child as they are
- Supports the child in every circumstance
- Accepts the child's feelings, including difficult ones
- Listens to, comforts, and hugs the child





A Family Our Way

There is no use comparing your child or family with others. Every family is different. It is good for parents to focus on those things that are important for their particular family.

- Focus on what is important to your family in particular.
- Do not compare yourself with other parents.
- Be understanding of your child's mistakes.
- Accept your child's feelings, including difficult ones.
- Spend time with your child.
- Show that you care about your child.
- Talk about your difficulties with fellow adults.



Feeling Adequate in Parenthood

Many parents want to bring up their children as well as possible. However, parenthood may sometimes be challenging. Parents may feel they are not good enough as parents. It is good to be aware that challenges happen to other families as well.

Remember that:

- Challenging moments are also part of parenthood
- It is enough that you try your best
- A child will love a parent despite their mistakes
- You can apologize to your child for your mistakes
- All families are different
- You are important and beloved to your child
- You should recognize the good in things and keep it in mind.



Parental Coping and Well-being

The ability of the parents to cope is reflected in the well-being of the entire family. A family's well-being is built on a balance between their resources and factors that cause stress.

Parents that cope well

- Maintain a good mood, a calm disposition, and stay present
- Have compassion for themselves and their family
- Take the family members' emotions and needs into account
- Can identify and accept their own emotions as well



Conversely, if the parents constantly feel urgency and stress, this can easily impact their parenting and the entire family. In daily life, these can be seen as fatigue, tension, and emotional outbursts.

Parental Coping and Well-being

A healthy relationship between the parents is an important element of parenthood. It is good for parents to sometimes spend time among themselves without the children. Both parents should also benefit from time alone.

Meeting with friends helps the parents to cope. Support networks are also important. Do not hesitate to ask people close to you for help, e.g. with taking care of the children.



- Show compassion towards yourself.
- Eat in a healthy and regular manner.
- Exercise regularly and partake in hobbies.
- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Make sure you also have time for yourself.
- Share responsibilities with your spouse.
- Maintain functional relationships within your family.
- Take advantage of help from persons close to you.
- Try to cut down on urgency and stress.
- Make time for your relationship and for the family to spend time together.



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Niitty 2 project 2023–2026

*Working together with immigrant families for a
better everyday life*

More information about the project:
projects.tuni.fi/niitty2

Perheinfo materials portal:
tuni.fi/perheinfo

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Sources:

Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto, Mieli ry, Mielenterveystalo, MLL & Perhepolku

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