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SELF-ESTEEM IN CHILDREN

Words | Shalmaly Chatterjee

Self-esteem is how much people value themselves and how important they believe they are in their world. You might hear people talk about the importance of self-esteem in kids, and “positive self-esteem” in particular. But what exactly is it? And why does it matter so much? Simply put, positive self-esteem is when people feel good about themselves.

Why is positive self-esteem important for kids?

Kids with positive self-esteem feel confident and capable. They value themselves and their abilities. They’re proud of the things they can do and want to try their best.

When kids are confident and



secure about who they are, they’re more likely to have a growth mindset. That means they can motivate themselves to take on new challenges and cope with and learn from mistakes. They’re also more likely to stand up for themselves and ask for help when they need it.



To help build your child's positive self-image as he grows, consider these dos and don'ts.

- **Do give children choices.**

Giving children choices — within a reasonable set of options preselected by you — makes them feel empowered. For example, at breakfast, you might offer your child the option of eggs or pancakes. Learning to make simple choices while he's young will help prepare your child for the more difficult choices he'll face as he grows.

- **Don't do everything for her.**

Be patient and let her work things out for herself. For example, it may be faster and easier to dress your preschooler, but letting her do it herself helps her learn new skills. The more she meets new challenges, the more competent and confident she'll feel.

- **Do let him know no one is perfect.** And explain that no one expects him to be. The way you react to your child's mistakes and

disappointments colours the way he will react.

- **Don't gush or offer insincere praise.** Kids are masters at detecting insincere praise or baseless compliments. Praise your child often, but be specific in your compliments so your words don't ring hollow. For instance, instead of reacting to your child's latest drawing with, "Wow, that's great. You're the best artist in the world," try something like, "I really like how you drew the whole family. You even included details like Daddy's beard."

- **Do assign age-appropriate household chores.** Give children responsibility for tasks such as setting the table, walking the dog, and folding laundry. They'll



- increase their feelings of competency and bolster their problem-solving skills.
- **Don't draw comparisons between your children.** Instead, appreciate each one's individuality and special gifts.
 - **Don't call children names or use sarcasm to make a point.** Never belittle your child's feelings. When you get angry take a short break so you don't say anything you'll regret. And keep in mind; you can dislike a child's actions without disliking the child. Be sure to illustrate the difference to your child.

- **Do spend one-on-one time with your child.** Whether it's grabbing a bite to eat or taking a bike ride, try to schedule some alone time with your child at least once a week. This is a great opportunity to talk about what's on her mind and to cement the bond the two of you share.



Shalmaly Chatterjee, Mental Health Professional

Dr. Nivedita Das - The Mental Health Warrior of Odisha



Dr. Nivedita Das, Ph.D. is a practising psychologist, professional life skills trainer, corporate trainer and faculty in the department of psychology at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar with extensive training experience including behavioural training for Police personnel, training for teachers at various schools, and capacity building for different organizations.

The person behind the personality

I was born in a small city in Odisha. I was raised by my mother as our biological father left us when I was just 1 year old. It was a blessing in disguise I guess as I got to stay with my maternal grandparents and the value system that I carry as a

professional and in my personal life is an extension of them and their teachings. I was academically good and was the topper of my University in Graduation with Psychology honours. After my graduation, I did my Post graduation and M.Phil from Delhi University. After 4 years of study in Delhi, I was back in Odisha after I got married in Odisha. Then I tried my hands in business a little, got involved with a few NGOs while doing a three-year law degree course and enjoying motherhood. I completed my Ph.D. and got into research and teaching. But all these years I



have never taken a break from the role of a psychologist and the social sector.

Her work

Since 2005, I am involved as a director and consultant psychologist with an organization called Grassrootsindia, (www.grassrootsindia.org) which works for women empowerment. I am also involved with an organisation which runs a Family Counselling Centre. In 2005 I met Ms Debbie Pennington, a social worker from the US, who also had been working for women empowerment in South Asian countries. We started our organization with the belief that if women are given the power to chose and design their life the way they want, they can be successful. We started our residential program for women from an underprivileged background and who were victims of violence and help them to rebuild their lives by providing them with an atmosphere for their overall well-being. There has been

no looking back and since then this organization has been a stepping stone for many women who have gotten empowered and also have become the true change agents of the society in their own small ways by bringing about positive changes in the lives of other women.



The writer in her

I have authored two books, 7 book chapters and have published more than 60 articles including journal articles in international and national journals and articles in popular magazines. I have presented my research papers in many international and national seminars and have been a resource person for many workshops related to psychosocial issues.



Passion for mental health

Being raised by a single working mother and seeing her struggles while growing up was something that has shaped the warrior in me. I took up psychology as a subject in my college as I always wanted to find answers to many questions that bothered me since my childhood starting from my biological father leaving us, my mother going through a divorce, the attitude of society towards women and I was amazed by my mother's optimistic outlook towards life and her resilience. The psychosocial issues and mental health of women in Odisha caught my attention more realistically when I got married and became a part of this unequal distribution of status among men

and women irrespective of their value system and education. How unjustly men enjoy supremacy over women in our society was really unknown to me. Soon after taking charge of my emotions and issues, I started doing awareness programs by associating myself with few organizations. I wanted to help women who were victims of violence and didn't know how to help themselves. I think it's the ability to tell your own story without masking it gives you the strength to overcome the hurdles in life. My work got appreciated and I was nominated to become the district member of the Odisha State Social Welfare Board (Advisory committee) which comes under the Women and Child Development Department.

The challenges she wants to be addressed

The biggest challenge we face is actually to reconstruct their identity which is shattered by the injustice done to them. Initially, we used to expect the family to take charge and get involved in the

woman/girl's life. Then we realised it's the women that the power lies within and no outside source can help them unless they are psychologically and emotionally strong and feel empowered.



Putting in her efforts

It is said that the pen is mightier than the sword. Since I am into research and teaching at the university also, through my research articles and teaching I emphasize the importance of psychosocial interventions and the role of mental health professionals in our society. It is very important to make the youngsters and budding psychologists understand the issues and challenges of this field and how they can contribute towards ensuring a healthy society. I have been writing about

mental health issues and how to tackle different issues that emerge at different stages of life in a popular English magazine intending to sensitise people to these issues and to remove the stigma attached to mental health/illness.

Plans for the future...

In future, I would like to see more openness towards issues relating to mental health and more mental health professionals working towards this goal. I am doing my bit. In future, we are planning to work more consciously and consistently with other professionals on social issues which result in mental health issues when left unaddressed.



Message to those dealing with mental health issues

Those who are dealing with mental health issues should know that they are not alone in this fight with mental health issues and there is nothing shameful about being mentally ill. There is help/treatment available for

mental health issues as there are treatments for physical illnesses. We all have the right to be happy and live life with dignity. Let us not be deterred by others' ignorance and help in building a more empathetic world that can ensure a healthy society with better mental health.



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A MOTHER'S TAKE ON MINDFUL PARENTING



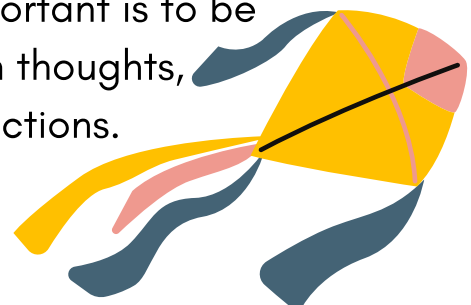
Words | Lalitha Sivapurapu

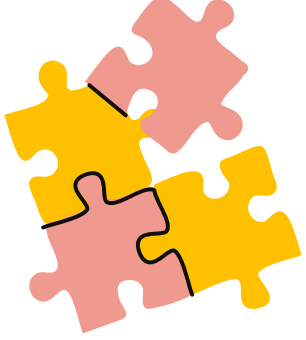
When I sat down to write this article, I wanted to first understand what the term 'mindful parenting' meant because parenting itself is very complex. There is no common rule or common approach and thereby presence of mind is very important to deal with a situation as it arises. Probably, to be mindful of the situation, being aware of it, dealing with it in the best possible way is mindful parenting.

I had once read somewhere that human beings are very immature, which means there is room for a lot of improvement, the scope for a lot of learning, unlike other species which react in more

definite and fixed ways to a situation. Children learn from what they see. For example, I used to tie a dupatta as a saree when I was small, maybe all of four, and act just like my mother. There is no specific reason, I would do it because that's what I saw. That is precisely, why mindful parenting is required. More so, in these times when our children are exposed to so much more because of the internet and easy accessibility to anything and everything.

I have realised that I have been practising mindful parenting even without realising that I was doing it. To be mindful, the first thing and the most important is to be aware of our own thoughts, emotions and reactions.





I have always been aware of my reaction to a situation, so I try, sometimes very hard, to be present 'in the moment' and not jump to conclusions. I give it some time, understand the emotions of my children and that has always helped.

Being mindful helps us look at the situation/problem from a different perspective. Being a parent to an almost adult, I can say that life as a parent is an emotional rollercoaster ride. I have always tried to understand his point of view in every situation. We both are learning and we both know that we are from two different times and there are bound to be different opinions but we always choose a middle path. I think this has become a possibility because I take responsibility for my feelings and I clearly explain to him why I feel in a certain way. It is as complex or as simple as that.

There are other times when we need to make an extra effort. For example, when I found my younger son hitting a friend of his my immediate reaction was to hit him, but then I calmed myself and spoke to him. I gave him a chance to speak to me about what made him act in such a manner. My approach gave him confidence that he could be open about his feelings and it really helped me to make him understand what was wrong in the way he behaved. Needless to say, he never hit anyone after that incident.

Being mindful will definitely strengthen the bond with our children. From what my years of experience as a mother has taught me so far is that - being aware and non-judgmental is truly the key to mindful parenting!



Lalitha Sivapurapu, Professional storyteller, blogger and a mother

BRINGING PASSION IN THE GAME - PIYALI PAUL

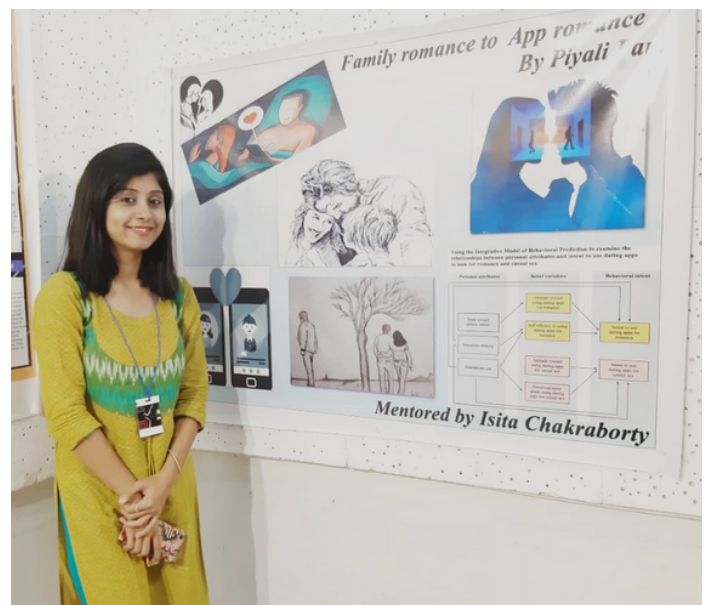


Piyali Paul is currently pursuing M.Sc in Clinical Psychology from NSHM Knowledge campus Durgapur. Before that, she has completed B.Sc (Psychology Hons) from Victoria Institution College affiliated with the University of Calcutta. She specializes in graphology and art therapy and is a life member of the Indian School Psychology Association and The Indian Science Congress Association. We interviewed her to understand the perspective of a budding psychologist in the field of mental health.

WE: What made you choose psychology as a subject to specialise in.

PP: I took psychology as my major course at the graduate level in college. I found myself completely

fascinated with the topics along with the theories & the concepts. Furtherly, I've pursued my post-graduation and continuing to travel into my career, the more fascinating the human mind continues to get. I've always been a "helper" type, so my typical answer has always been "to help people overcome their inner demons & let them know that their lives are worth living."



- I have dreams of becoming a Clinical Psychologist and helping people throughout my life along with a huge passion for Psychometric assessment.
- I want to start my non-profit organization that aids young adults who grew up in foster care. I want to help people in their transformation towards becoming unconditionally loving, tolerant, and compassionate.
- The thought of being able to connect and help a child grow both academically and socially is the greatest reward I could ever receive.
- My goal is to make something of myself. I found myself going above and beyond the curriculum purely out of curiosity.



WE: Why do you think it is important to educate youth on the importance of mental health?


PP: Education about mental health should start at an early age. Because children spend so much of their daily life at school, therefore imparting education about mental health in schools has become a necessity. Adolescence (10–19 years) is a unique and formative time. Multiple physical, emotional and social changes, including exposure to poverty, abuse, or violence, can make adolescents vulnerable to mental health problems. Promoting psychological well-being and protecting adolescents from adverse experiences and risk factors that may impact their potential to thrive is critical for their well-being during adolescence and for their physical and mental health in adulthood. Multiple factors determine mental health outcomes. The more risk factors adolescents are exposed to, the greater the potential impact on their mental health.

WE: Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

PP: In the next 5-10 years, I want to see myself as an eminent research scholar which is my childhood dream. I am a person of simple needs. I have never stopped feeding my insatiable hunger for learning. I want to continue learning while I am performing as a mental health professional. I have always set my priorities in life. Today I can say that those priorities have helped me achieve various things. Those decisions have rewarded me with the opportunity that I already achieved. It is almost certain that I have set up priorities for the upcoming years. I want to attain new heights in my career whilst taking forward the goal to pursue my PhD. I need to synchronize my targets. The five years that lie ahead can be marked with milestones of progress and I am sure the years will be mutually progressive for me. I hope I hit the target I have aimed for.

WE: What difference do you want to make in the area of mental health in India?

PP: Since grade 4 we have been studying that India is an agricultural country. The majority of the population did not get the opportunity to join a school, and maybe a huge portion of these individuals are just primarily educated. This situation poses a huge obstacle in the way of spreading awareness regarding mental health. In my opinion, children need to be made aware of mental health from an early age and should be trained to spread their knowledge to their surroundings as well, that would include their parents, relatives, and other immediate members of their surroundings. Also, I would like to make people aware of the various mental health care programs that are already present in our country but due to sheer ignorance and misconceptions, common people are not getting the benefit. Moreover, mental



- health care should be a primary
- health need.

I think mental health, not just treating it but even talking about it is a great taboo in India. Here, in India, it is still thought to be very uncomfortable or socially unacceptable to go for therapies or even talk about once mental health-related problems. I would like to make people aware and educate them on the importance of maintaining proper mental health and how it can make a person more comfortable or successful or even help the person in knowing his own self and overcoming problems and achieve success in every sphere of life; be it personal or professional.

WE: Share with us some of your likes, dislikes and how you like to spend your free time.

PP: I like when people have the right perspective about their life. A person with the right perspective of life acts as an asset to help others for their better well-being. I like to spend

time with my close friends. Such friends are a blessing who are always there to give their back. I dislike dishonesty and indifferent people who don't care about others. Some individuals become lucky and, in some way, reach the top of achieving something like being rich. However, it is disappointing when those people do not remember others who don't match their level and also want to be pulled up. Being proud of own success is not bad, but it becomes a problem when pride takes over a kind and caring heart. In my leisure time, I mostly like to read poetry, novels, scientific fictional books. I have a passion for photography so in the free time I nurture this skill. I like to utilise my leisure time and enjoy very much what I do. Reading books is the most prudent investment of leisure time and I learn many things from reading.



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Mindful Parenting and Psychological Health of a Child

Words | Dr. Darshana Sarmah

Parenting is a two-way process. The moment the child is born, a new 'you' is also born (and gradually a better you). Parenting is tough because the entire process is delicate. It is the great sole responsibility of the parents to make a complete package of a healthy child. Often, attending a child physically may not imply giving attention to them.

In our busy schedule, many a time, children end up becoming a part of our duties. Unknowingly we often fail to fulfil some hidden needs of a child, because we already remain preoccupied with one thing or the other. We, parents, generally stay concerned about the physical health of our child but often ignore the invisible aspect - 'mental health'.



Whether a child is mentally growing the way he/she should grow, is a matter of serious concern. Mental health is not mere sharpness of a brain. It is about the confidence, smartness, self-esteem, positiveness in the attitude of a child. It is very important for a child to form a correct opinion of himself/herself and know their weakness and strength before they step out into this world. Often we parents (almost unknowingly), put a direct or indirect form of influence on them, which in the long run, frames their individual personality development. A physically sound appearing child may also suffer from low self-esteem and confidence.

In this aspect, Mindful Parenting has a major role to play in designing a healthy mindset of child. Mindful parenting has been identified as a promising approach that promotes emotion regulation both in parents and children. It calls for an intentional moment to moment awareness while nurturing a relationship with a child with non-judgemental acceptance, self-regulation in parenting and compassion.

The first thing about mindful parenting is to be aware of your own being, your strengths, weakness, behaviour, activities.

Since children are keen observer, so parents are in turn need to be keen observer too, to observe what they are offering a child to learn and pick up from them as well as from surrounding.

Unconscious parenting attacks the psychological immunity of a child. The calm presence of the parents around, with wholehearted engagement, leads to more inclination from children, and they gain a sense of unspoken secureness around, which boosts up their confidence, reduces stress in them, and enhances self-regulation of emotions.



Following are a few pointers that initiate mindful parenting:

- **Don't shout and yell:** Yelling and shouting make them rebellious. Be patient and make yourself understand it is their age to be mischievous.
- **Don't criticise:** Regular criticism hurts their self-esteem and may bring a sense of detachment in them. Highlight the teachings from the mistakes, rather than rebuking them from doing so.
- **Don't compare:** Comparison implants weak feeling in the mind of a child and lowers their confidence. They become conscious of what they can't do, rather than focusing on what they can do. Help them search and realise their uniqueness.
- **Express your love often:** Love is to be expressed. It strengthens the bonding, making them less vulnerable to the outside world as well as they enjoy a sense of security wherever they go.
- **Be a good listener:** Always try to become a good listener for your child. In such case, they form the habit of telling you their daily account. Try limiting your distractions when with kids.
- **Create respectful fear:** A child should always carry the consciousness of not hurting his/her parent rather than being gets scolded.
- **Stay Happy:** Happy parents lead to happy children. Children can sense, feel and imbibe the aura of energy we carry around us.
- **Be friends:** It is always good to be considerate like a good friend rather than behaving as a strict parent. Grant them some space with their growing stage.



Dr. Darshana Sarmah, Teacher by profession, blogger by passion, keen believer in mental fitness



IMPROVING YOUR CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

Words I Jolly Vin

Mindful parenting is all about raising a child with emotional, social, mental, physical and intellectual development. Through this article, I am sharing a few tips for a child's physical and mental well-being.

A journey of parenthood starts with planning for the baby. Detoxification before one month of planning to conceive is very important for a healthy pregnancy and baby.

Consult your doctor for any vitamins and nutrition check. Superfoods like nuts, seeds, herbs, vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, pea and lentils and eggs yellow are a rich source of choline. Choline, which is similar to B vitamins is an important

nutrient for the brain and nervous system which needs to regulate memory, mood, muscle control and other functions and plays important role in a child's growth.

Vitamin D deficiency is incredibly common in kids nowadays due to less exposure to the sun.

Symptoms are low energy levels, dry skin, weak bones, excess sweating, weak eyesight and anxiety.



Folate B12, iron, zinc, omega 3 fatty acid and vitamin C also plays an important role in mental and physical growth. To overcome nutrients deficiency, healthy fats, protein, complex carbs, minerals and vitamin intake is very important. Parents should involve their child in kitchen activities to cultivate healthy food habits.

Too much processed and junk food, fizzy drinks can harm not only kid's growth but also harm their brain and it causes aggressions, depression and stress. It is parents' responsibility to educate and promote the goodness of home-cooked food.

Nowadays parents are more aware of child development. They feed them all kind of superfood and nutritious food but do check that your child can digest that food and absorb the nutrients. If they are suffering from any acute diseases then try to fix their digestion first. Weak digestion leads to many diseases.

Peaceful sleep is also very important for their growth. Too much sugar intake in the dinner gives more energy hence kids are unable to sleep on time. Try to lower your child's stress levels by giving an oil massage. Outdoor activities like cycling, swimming etc. boost endorphins (happy hormone) levels which also reduce stress and anxiety while increasing the self-esteem and creativity of kids.

These are simple, easy to follow measures that parents can use mindfully while helping their children develop healthy eating habits and consequently improve their relationship with food.



Jolly Vin, Founder - 'Holistic Nutrition By Jolly', nutrition author and lifestyle coach

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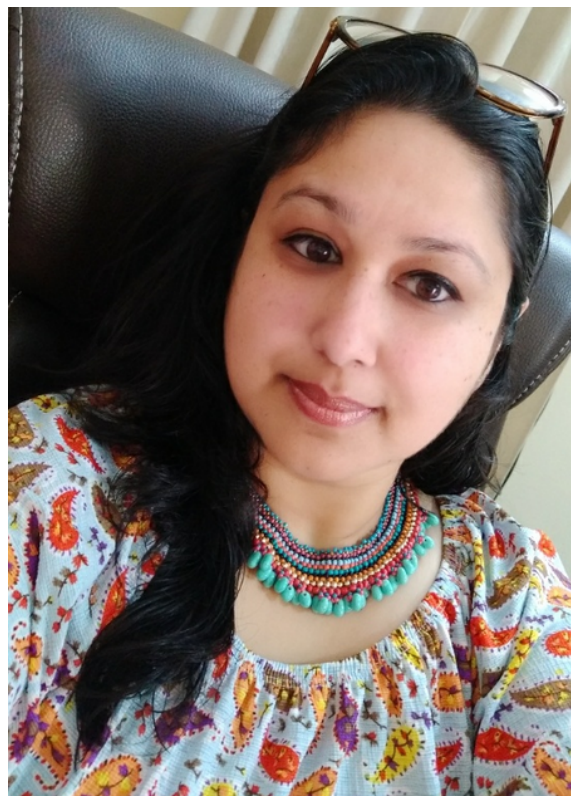
HELPING PEOPLE 'RISE'

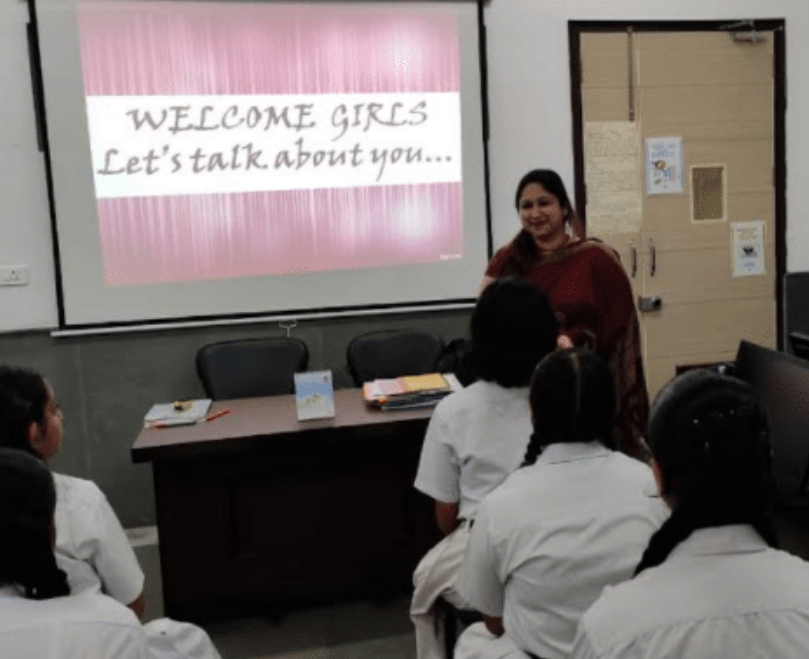
- DR. JASMINE VIJ

Dr. Jasmine Vij is a Counselor, Psychotherapist & Psychological Trainer. She is the founder of RISE Psychological Services working for the mental health of individuals specifically and for society, at large. She works as a counselor and therapist providing support to clients who are going through emotional, intra/interpersonal and psychological struggles. At a broader level, seminars, workshops and trainings help her to achieve the goal of positive psychology.

WE: Tell our readers a bit about yourself.

JV: I'm a passionate psychologist who works in the field of mental health. After completing my Masters and PhD. in psychology and having undergone several certified trainings and diplomas and further attaining an experience of 16 years in the field of psychology, today I apply my skills and expertise in diagnosing, handling, counseling, and providing support to clients who





are going through emotional, intra/inter-personal & psychological struggles. Also, I psycho-educate the general public and train young budding psychologists.

WE: How did your journey as a psychologist begin?

JV: Right from the beginning I was going with my instincts to observe human behaviour, it was very much inborn to have an interest in this area. But I belong to a time and place when only social status was important in career choice and no consideration was given to interest at all. So, students could pursue medical or non-medical after their basic compulsory education. In fact, I was the only

one to say openly, when asked by my class teacher in 10th that I wanted to study psychology and was looked at by surprise and scorn. I observed that too!!

WE: Tell us more about the work that you do, the clinic you run and the services provided by you.

JV: I am the founder of RISE Psychological Services. The name itself indicates that the basic motto of my clinic is to make people rise above their issues, problems and ignorance to a level where they can be better adjusted to themselves and to the society or people they live with. My daily works include dealing with people (children adolescents, adults, elderly) who are unable to handle certain

aspects of their life and need professional help in that. It includes dealing with stress, mild depression, anxiety, emotional problems, adjustment issues, child behaviour & academic problems, marital counseling and workplace issues. Additionally, I conduct private workshops for training purposes and also indulge in seminars (recently webinars) for increasing awareness on various platforms such as schools, colleges, institutes, organizations and the like. Also, I provide internship opportunities for psychology students in my clinic.



WE: What challenges did you face?

JV: I did not face any challenges as such in being trained as a psychologist because I was born to be one. But professionally speaking, it is just that people need to be made more aware of and convinced of how counseling and psychotherapy works. They have to be told that no magic is going to change them and they will have to put an equal effort. Then there are time and fee concerns which I think most psychologists are facing in India. Such issues can be resolved if the required respect and recognition are provided to psychologists with a proper check on quacks.

WE: How do you think your initiative is helping people who are facing mental health issues?

JV: The awareness campaigns really help to give assurance and strength to people who are unable to seek treatment because of myths or taboos. It gives them an understanding that there is an issue that needs to be resolved in a specific manner with their own inner energies. Moreover, they are given new perspectives which they have not thought of before thereby changing the way they think and behave and making them better human beings. Also, they become open to the idea that many things can be sorted out by talking about it and medicines is not the only solution to mental health issues.



WE: What is your message to mental health advocates and psychologists?

JV: We, as mental health professionals have to be very cautious because what we say means a lot to our clients. We can't give a passing comment, a general statement, or an over-generalized judgment. Whatever we say matters and in turn shapes our clients' life, so it is a big responsibility. One should never exercise a particular technique or therapy without proper training and expertise. I have come across 'so-called psychologists' ruining their client's lives. Please do not destroy the basic purpose of your profession and spoil other psychologist's reputation too.



ON THE COVER

THE COLOURS OF LIFE

Artist | Nakul Waghe

"As the year 2020 was completely spent under lockdown and we since we are reliving those times again in 2021, every individual understands the importance of home. It doesn't matter how big or small the house is, but everyone found happiness by staying together with the family during a stressful time. People realized that peace of mind can also be achieved by spending quality time with family at home rather than going out shopping at the malls or watching movies in multiplexes. This painting is a collection of many such houses and buildings which are painted in vibrant colors."



Nakul Waghe, Watercolor and acrylic hobby artist, who paints to meditate and is an IT consultant by profession



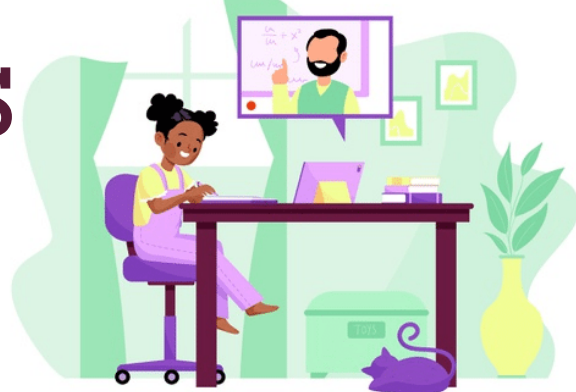
A PARENTAL GUIDE TO DEAL WITH STRESS OF ONLINE CLASSES

Words | Priyanka Chakraborty

As technology is advancing every passing day, every aspect of human life is taking a route towards its virtual aspect.

Starting from online banking to online shopping, online payment to online ticketing, everything is going on the web platform. In this race, online teaching and learning are also not behind.

A further contribution of the pandemic has elevated the system of education from brick and mortar classrooms to digital learning. In such a scenario, online learning is the future of education or not, is a heated topic. As every coin has two sides, so is the situation with



online learning. It has its own wow and woes, not only from a student's and teacher's perspective but from a parent's perspective as well.

Since the pandemic is not yet over and there is no significant information about when and how the regular classes will be conducted, online classes are the only mode of education remaining for learning and upgrading the skills. It is done from the comfort of the home itself. But is it as easy as it seems like?? The most probable answer received is a big NO.



Since last year, each one of us has experienced a weird shift in our physical, mental and cognitive attitudes. The students or the 'learning section' of the society is affected the most. Online classes that are defined to be executed from the comfort of home is not that easy as it sounds! It not only disturbed the child's way of learning but also the way their parents tackle them is getting more complicated. We cannot avoid this situation. But as a parent, it is our duty to discover a solution to cure this problem. Below the lane, are some tips for parents to help their ward cope with the stress of online learning.

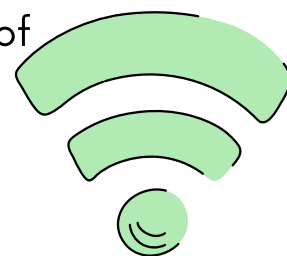
1. Be kind and patient to your kid; teach them the value of being on time.

As everything is getting disturbed, so is the schedule of sleeping and waking up. Children play online games till midnight, wake up late and then

in a hurry join the online classes. At that time, if they haven't taken their first meal of the day, they will trouble themselves the entire day. So, ensure that your child is maintaining their schedule to sleep on time, next morning, wake on time, take a bath, have their breakfast and then attentively join the online classes.

Sometimes there are issues with net connectivity. The child may get irked as they are unable to connect and the teacher on the other end is continuing the classes. At that time, scolding them or leaving them alone in the situation is not a good option.

Instead of reacting adversely to the situation, teach your child to respond calmly and judiciously. This can be done only when you are patient with the situation and kind towards your kid. Therefore, make them learn how to deal with these kinds of dynamic situations.



2. Provide a dedicated place for their learning.

In online platforms, there are cameras and mikes, which can record the situation of every home. No child wants their classmates to hear or see what is going inside their home. During online classes, it is seen that there are many background noises from the student's end. Whether it is a conversation between family members or unwanted noises from the kitchen, each of them can distract the child's focus from online classes. So, it is the parent who is advised to be



careful that your kid stays focussed and does not get disturbed from the surrounding noises.

Although it is impossible to completely eliminate these noises, they can be avoided by some changes in the home. Make sure your kid is sitting in a room where there is no one to come and go every moment. If possible, close all the windows of the room during the classes, so that the child remains focused. At last, try to keep home quiet when the online classes are going home, with fewer or no conversations.



3. Never trust blindly.

The above statement may sound a bit bitter but that is something every parent should be aware of. The Internet is a world where along with ample amounts of knowledge, there are a plethora of distractions. As they are in their growing age, it is very obvious that they may get attracted to something that they should not. In such a case, they might lie that they are attending online classes, but in reality, they are busy with some other internet activity, whether it can be gaming or watching a movie. There is nothing wrong in doing any one of them, but deceiving the parent and compromising with the study is not justified. Therefore, trust your child but don't have blind faith in them.

Always be in connection with the school and the teacher regarding their online presence and performance.

Last but not the least, remember this time shall too pass, but what's most important is your child's mental health and their learning. So anyhow, explore new methods to connect with your child so that they can share their tough moments and heal the stress that the pandemic had created in their mind.



Priyanka Chakraborty, Believer of empowering people for creating a better society

Be A 'Mindful' Not A 'Mindfull' Parent

Words | Dr. Harshmeet Kaur

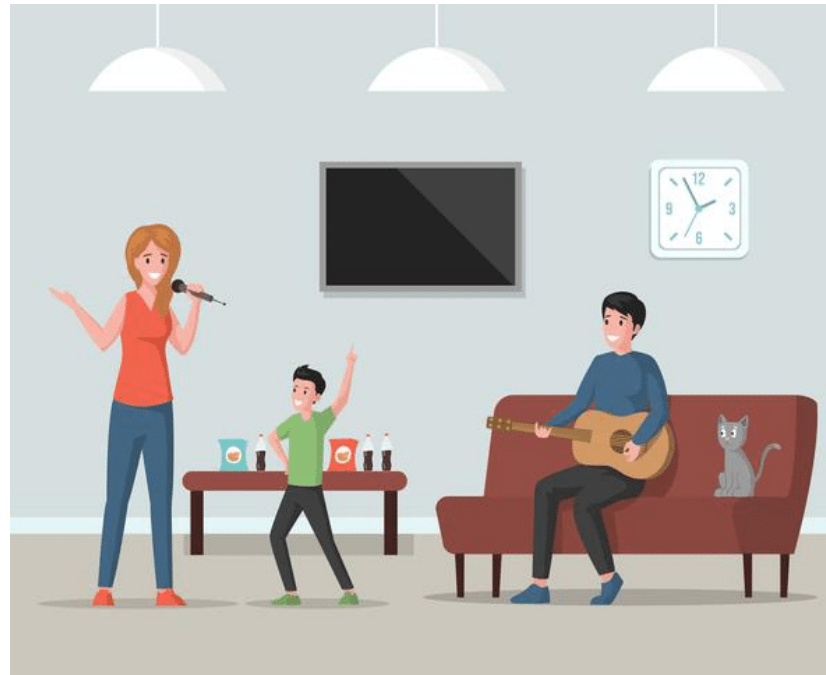
These are challenging times. Kids are stressed and have been missing the normal times. Parents have been raising kids with incredible resilience and strength. Many of them cancelled their in-person vacations. They delved deeply into innovating and creating an indoor routine for their kids. What I have learnt from parent stories is that many of them navigated challenges with adaptability. I interviewed some of them and asked them what made them have an expression of joy along with work from home calls and online classes of kids. Most of them practised mindfulness i.e., focused on the present moment rather than worrying about the future of their kids.

Manpreet Kaur, a London-based life coach and a mindful parent says, *"For me, mindful parenting meant listening to my children with no distractions and being non-judgmental towards children as well as myself. It also meant to be aware of my and their emotions to avoid any automatic reactions. To me, self-regulating parent-child relationships mean to be more tolerant of and supportive of their emotional displays rather than dismissing them and finally be compassionate towards them and myself. The focus should be on effort rather than results"*

There are some of the ways which helped parents and kids manage their stress during the pandemic.

For example:

1. Taking some moments to practice breathing.
2. Exercising together.
3. Encouraging kids to practice gratitude.
4. Having some playtime during the evening.
5. Adding proper nutrition to the diet.
6. Practising healthy tech routine: No use of devices before sleep, time-limits for social media, and staying away from phone/tv while having food.
7. Soaking up sunlight when possible.
8. Considering sleep as the most powerful relaxant.
9. Most importantly, having close conversations with kids and reassuring them that they are safe, healthy, and much loved.



Like mindful parents, let our kids know that they are resilient to care of themselves, others and the planet. Let us all take some moment to remember all the brilliant, brave, parents around the world for raising kids mindfully during the pandemic.



Dr. Harshmeet Kaur, Mental Health & Wellness Coach;
Founder of TheBloom



' THE BOY IN THE DARK HOLE ' BY VAISHALI SHROFF

Words | Prisha Gupta

"The Boy in the Dark Hole" is a children's book by prolific writer Vaishali Shroff. It is a short yet profound story about a 10-year-old boy, SP, who has fallen into a deep, black hole and can't seem to get out.

The tale is written from the point-of-view of SP himself, and how a dark hole is swallowing him up. He only wants to sketch, read his favourite poems, have fun with his two best friends Kuhu and Lobo, and chase rainbows with his father along the streets of Mumbai. But his father wants him to play football



when SP has no interest in it, he is bullied and teased at school and he can't enjoy the things he loves doing most.

Looking into a cardboard tube his mom gave him to put in his craft box, he imagines that he is falling into a hole, reliving the worst days of his life.

The book does a great job explaining the concept of depression to children while exploring the fact that even their mental health is important. It also shows that sometimes a little light can illuminate a whole world.



An illustration by Samidha Gunjal



The book's language is simple and easy to understand, and the beautiful illustrations by Samidha Gunjal bring life to its pages. Children of all ages shall certainly enjoy perusing this book. It is surely worth giving a read!



Prisha Gupta, Grade 8 student, avid reader, writer and aspiring artist

Nurture A Mindful Future

Words | Zinaida D'souza

You must have heard this saying “You can’t pour from an empty cup”. It is very essential that parents first take care of their mental health, only then they can raise healthy-minded children. Mindful parenting means being aware of what influences your own emotions, feelings and behaviours rather than projecting them onto your children. Managing your own emotions and behaviours teaches your child to manage theirs. Mindful parenting is the key to raise children to be better adults.

Why is mindful parenting the need of the hour?

The coronavirus pandemic has brought unexpected challenges in our lives. It has been difficult not only for adults but for children as well. The pandemic situation has added more stress to parenting responsibility. Mindful parenting is the absolute need of the hour as it will help in raising children who are more resilient in handling adverse situations effectively.

How to MINDFULLY parent your child?

- **Listen, be present in the moment:**

One of the common mistake parents tend to make is they fail to listen and be patient with their children. You need to listen to what your child is saying, no matter how silly you find it. Come down to their level of understanding and be present with them in that moment, keeping aside your busy life.

- **Self-awareness:** Being self-aware is extremely important because when you have a better understanding of yourself, you are empowered to make changes and to build on your areas of strength as well as identify areas where you would like to make improvements.

- **Emotional stability:** Your emotions are so powerful that they influence your thoughts, decisions, and actions. Being emotionally

stable simply means not let your conscious or

unconscious emotions take

control of you and get the

better of you. You can

handle your emotions well by

bringing them to your

conscious mind and dealing

with them effectively.

Emotional stability helps you

think and analyse the

situation better, allowing you

to come up with a solution.

- **Identify emotional**

triggers: An emotional

trigger is can be a painful

memory, past experiences, or

any event that fuels an

intense emotional reaction,

regardless of your current

mood. These triggers cause

us to react in negative ways

because of the pain

attached to the past

experience. Be mindful

about what you are feeling

and identify if there is any

past pain that is influencing

your emotions or behaviours.

- **Choose your words wisely:**

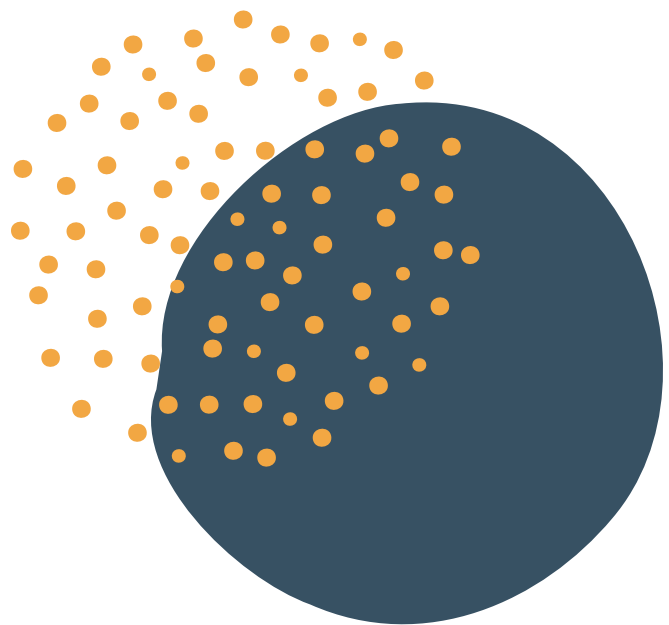
Your words can have a huge



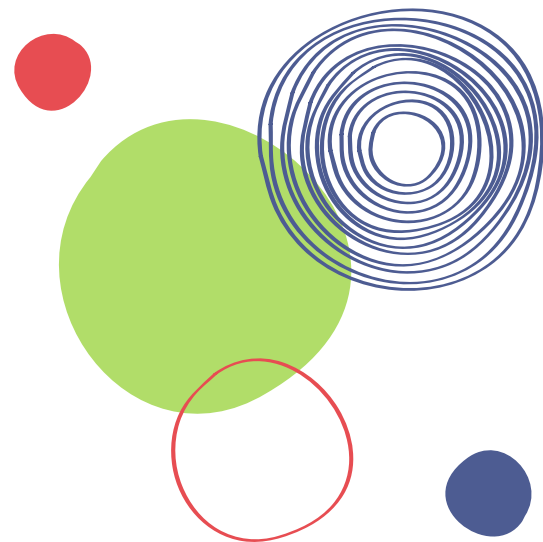
impact on your child's mental wellbeing and they become the foundation of their overall growth. Show respect to your child. Choose kind and positive words when talking to your child, as your words will become their reality.

- **Validate feelings:** Every human has the gift of feeling different emotions. Validate those feelings even if they are not pleasant ones. Your feelings and emotions tell you a lot about yourself and it will tell you a lot about your child as well. Validate them and treat them responsibly.

- **Respond, don't react:** Every problem you encounter while parenting requires an appropriate response, rather than a reaction. A common error made by most parents. Reactions often come when we feel frustrated and are unable to handle our own self. They can be often harmful to the child's mental growth. Replace your reactions by responding to the problem in a calmer manner. If you feel you have reacted negatively, apologise to your child. Children learn to apologise for their mistakes if adults do the same.



- **Give choices:** Parents often choose and decide everything for their children. They take away the power of letting their child make a choice. Choices can help children in improving their self-esteem, decision making and problem-solving ability. Children feel in control when they are allowed to make choices for themselves.
- **Realistic vs unrealistic expectations:** Be more realistic with the expectations that you keep from your child. It is the child who bears the burden of parent's unrealistic expectations. This burden weighs them down, puts pressure on them and that can hamper their overall mental health



- **Meditation & grounding:** Meditation and grounding are the most useful tools to practice mindfulness. Grounding is a therapeutic technique that involves doing activities that “ground” or bring you back to the present and stops you from worrying about the past or the future.



Zinaida D'souza,
Mental Health Professional,
Clinical and Counselling
Psychologist

