

Connection, Curiosity and Compassion - Understanding and Navigating Challenging Behaviors

**LCPS Mental Health and Wellness Conference
January 27, 2024**

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Formed Families Forward - who we are...

- A family-led resource center in Northern Virginia supporting foster, adoptive and kinship families who are raising children, youth & young adults with special needs, and professionals who work with our families.
- We offer free training, consultations to families, events, resources, and systems navigation. Also - peer support groups; webinars; self-paced online courses; classes; videos and other resources.
- Family partner to Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS; a VDOE project)

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Learning Objectives:

- ❖ **Connection** is when two or more people interact with each other and each person feels valued, seen, and heard.
- ❖ **Curiosity** is having a strong desire to learn or know something.
- ❖ **Compassion** literally means “to suffer together.”
 - **Towards Others** - compassion is an emotional response to empathy or sympathy and creates a desire to help
 - **Towards Yourself** - Self-compassion is simply the process of turning compassion inward.

Connections matter!

Strong ties with family, friends and the community provide us with happiness, security, support and a sense of purpose.

Being connected to others is important for our mental and physical wellbeing and can be a protective factor against anxiety and depression.

“Where did we get the notion that in order to make children behave better, we must first make them feel worse?” - Dr. Jane Nelson



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Children require **CONNECTION** before
they can become receptive to
CORRECTION!



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Broadening the Definition of Connection

- It's okay to be kind *and* firm.
- Quality matters more than quantity.
- Listening is powerful.
- Problem-solving is a valuable life skill.
- Nothing is personal.
- Curiosity takes compassion.

Discipline Cheat Sheet

Instead of that, Say this.

Simple phrases and ideas for diffusing tough situations with your child.



What were you thinking?!?!

Instead say:
I'm going to help you with this.

How many times do I have to tell you?

Instead say:
I'm going to do () so that it will be easier for you.

Stop it! You are embarrassing me!

Instead say:
Let's go to a quieter place to get this sorted out.



If you don't stop that, no Xbox for a week!

Instead say:
I can see this is tricky for you. We are going to solve this later. Let's get a drink of water.

Go to your room!

Instead say:
Come here. I've got you.



No stars on the star chart for you!

Instead say:
Let's figure out a better way for next time.



Stop. That. Right. NOW!



Instead say:
If you need to get your mad out - then go ahead. It's okay. I've got you.

Silent eye-roll and frustrated sigh

Instead do:
Kindness in your eyes and a compassionate hair tousle

You are IMPOSSIBLE!

Instead say:
We will get this figured out. I can handle ALL of you. It's all good.



DR. VANESSA LAPOINTE

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10 Simple Things You Can Do to Decrease Challenging Behaviors by Increasing Connection Checklist



Conversational Curiosity Questions

1. Start with, “I’m noticing _____.”
2. Ask a curiosity question.
3. Keep listening.
4. Repeat back what you heard.
5. Offer support or resources as relevant.

Remember - Connection is a Process

“All Behavior Makes Sense”

- Rebyn Gebbel

That behavior is:

~~Weird~~

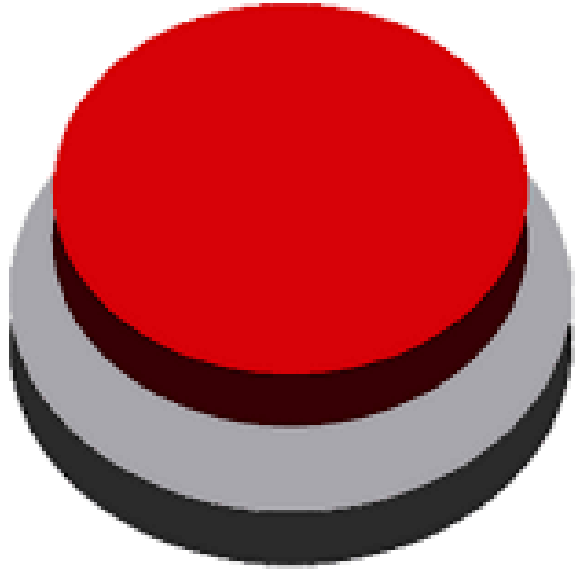
~~Bizarre~~

~~Abnormal~~

~~Just plain odd!~~

**Behavior
makes sense!**

StaleCheerios.com



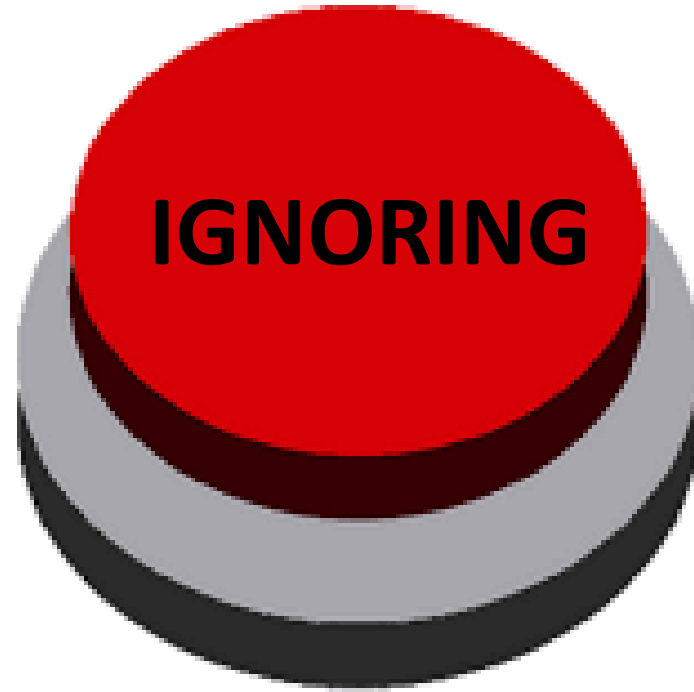
To *push someone's buttons* means to do something that results in an immediate reaction from someone, to do or say something that arouses an instantaneous and usually emotional reaction. - grammarist.com



ORWARD



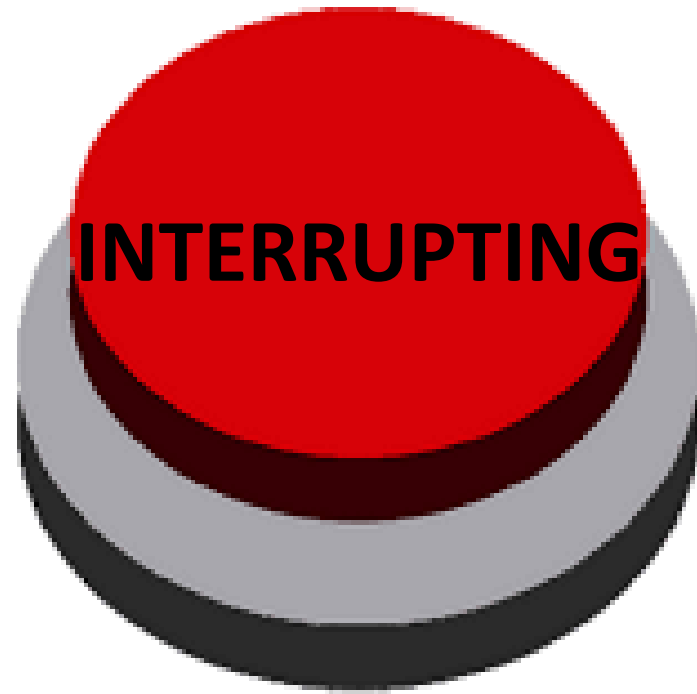
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Let's get curious...





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Reflection



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcQhwGRtBUk>

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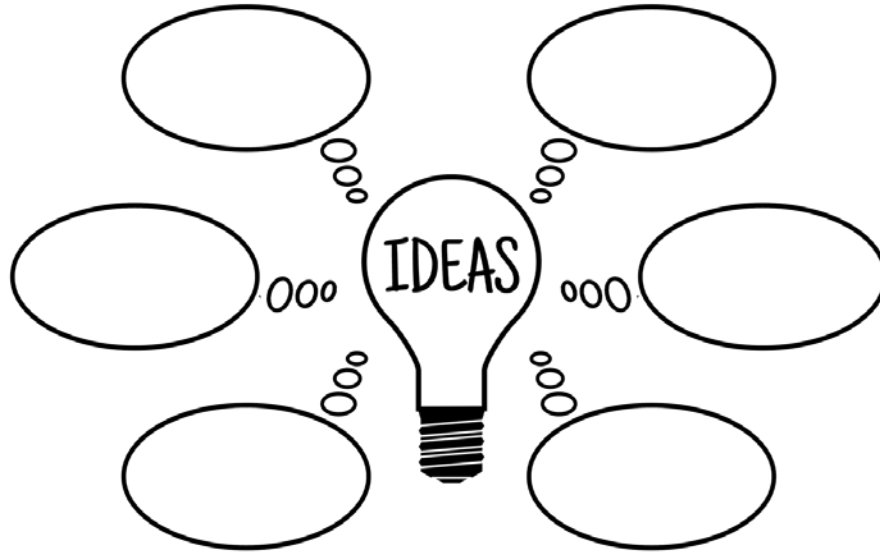
Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings – after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect? - Dr. Kristin Neff

Put your oxygen mask on first!



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What does self care mean to you?



What is self-care?

Families Rising defines self-care as a culture of habits, hobbies, and actions that we practice as a way of helping ourselves. Self-care activities:

- **keep us balanced**
- **they can help us be better caretakers**
- **by doing these things ourselves, we model a healthy lifestyle for our children.**

Self-care can be....



10 Steps to Self-Care - Self Wellness

1. Give yourself permission



Source: Families Rising, formally North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC.org)

2. Keep it simple; Prioritize; Don't over commit



3. Stop comparing yourself to others



4. Know your triggers and have a plan



The Plan:

- Self compassion
- Self-care
- Meditation/Breathing exercises
- Support
- Therapy

5. Schedule Down Time/Quiet Time



“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”

– Anne Lamott

6. Accentuate the positive/Express gratitude



7. Have something to look forward to



8. Have a source of support



9. Get Physical



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10. Routines & Schedule

- Keep everyone in the loop - have a mini meeting: “here’s what the week looks like”
- Visual reminders - family calendar, charts, check lists
- Build self-care into the schedule



Self-Care Bingo

SELF
care
IS NOT SELFISH

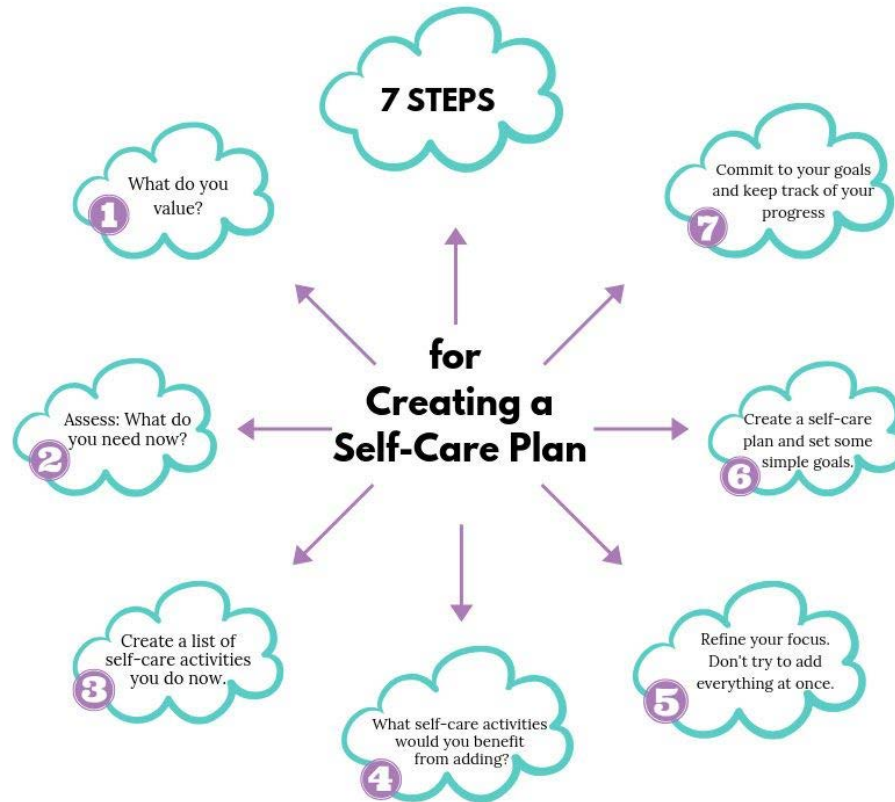
SELF-CARE				
B	I	N	G	O
BINGE WATCH A TV SHOW	COLOR, PAINT, DRAW OR DOODLE	SLEEP IN	MOVE YOUR BODY	TRY A NEW RECIPE
ENJOY A HEALTHY SNACK	READ A BOOK	LISTEN TO A PODCAST	TAKE A NAP	GO FOR A WALK
BUY SOMETHING JUST FOR YOU	RELAX ON A PATIO	FREE SPACE	LISTEN TO MUSIC	ENJOY A COCKTAIL/ MOCKTAIL
TOUCH BASE WITH A FRIEND	CROSS SOMETHING OFF YOUR TO-DO LIST	SAVOR SOMETHING CHOCOLATE	WORK ON A PUZZLE	BUY YOURSELF FLOWERS
STRETCH	TAKE TEN DEEP BREATHS	PLAY A GAME	SPEND TIME IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS	WATCH A MOVIE

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If we don't take care of ourselves?

- Guilt, resentment, anger
- Fatigue, trouble sleeping
- Drink/eat too much
- Health issues
- Depression, negative self-thoughts, feeling a failure
- Feeling overwhelmed at work, home
- Personal relationships suffer
- Lose our ability to care, connect, and empathize





♡ ChronicIllnessWarriorLife.co

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Mindfulness

“The practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.”

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

Practice Activity-Mindfulness

Use your five senses to ground yourself.

Name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste





[2 minute guided meditation](#)

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Resources to print

https://www.optimalbrainintegration.com/files/ugd/ba13a8_4023f7ff34314d0199694a74a48496fc.pdf

https://www.canva.com/design/DAF6LBV69OA/oSXBpdmLeZkxRgtbzi3X0A/edit?utm_content=DAF6LBV69OA&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

<https://i.huffpost.com/gen/3903196/thumbs/o-INFOGRAPHIC-570.jpg?8>

Also bring copies of some parenting books, fliers and business cards