

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

through Transitions

Transitions can feel overwhelming for children, even when the change is positive. With understanding and connection, children can feel safe, supported and more confident.

SIGNS A CHILD MAY BE STRUGGLING

- Increased emotional outbursts
- Withdrawal or shutting down
- Change in sleep or appetite
- Clinginess or separation anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability or aggression
- Regression in behaviour
- Increased worry or sadness



WAYS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN DURING TRANSITION



CREATE PREDICTABILITY
Routines help children feel safer during uncertain times.



KEEP COMMUNICATION GENTLE & HONEST
use age-appropriate language and allow space for questions.



KEEP COMMUNICATION GENTLE & HONEST
Children do not need their emotions fixed immediately. Feeling understood matters.



OFFER CHOICES WHEN POSSIBLE
Small choices can help children regain a sense of control.



STAY CONNECTED WHEN POSSIBLE
Connection before correction helps children feel emotionally safe.



BE PATIENT WITH BEHAVIOUR CHANGES
Transitions can activate stress responses. Behaviour often communicates unmet needs.



GENTLE REMINDER

Children do not need perfect caregivers. They need safe, supportive relationships where they feel seen, valued and cared for.



UNDERSTANDING *Trauma Responses*

Trauma affects how the brain and body respond to stress, safety, and connection. Trauma responses are not “bad behaviour”. They are often survival responses developed to help a person cope with overwhelming experiences.

FIGHT



- Anger
- Defensiveness
- Controlling behaviour

FLIGHT



- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Avoidance
- Perfectionism

FREEZE



- Shutting down
- Numbness
- Difficulty making decisions
- Withdrawal

FAWN



- People pleasing
- Difficulty setting boundaries
- Fear of conflict
- Prioritizing others over self

WHAT TRAUMA CAN IMPACT

- ♡ Emotional regulation
- ♡ Relationship & attachment
- ♡ Sleep & concentration
- ♡ Sense of safety
- ♡ Trust
- ♡ Self-worth



HELPFUL WAYS TO SUPPORT HEALING

- Consistency and routine
- Calm, predictable responses
- Emotional validation
- Safe relationships
- Grounding and regulation tools
- Patience and compassion



GENTLE REMINDER
Healing does not happen through shame.
Healing grows through safety, connection and support.



CAREGIVER *Burnout Checklist*



Caring for others can be deeply meaningful, and deeply exhausting. Burnout often happens slowly over time when stress, emotional demands and caregiving responsibilities outweigh rest and support.

SIGNS OF CAREGIVER BURNOUT

- ☐ Feeling emotionally exhausted most days
- ☐ Difficulty relaxing or 'turning off'
- ☐ Increased irritability or frustration
- ☐ Feeling numb or disconnected
- ☐ Trouble sleeping
- ☐ Constant worry or tension
- ☐ Feeling guilty for needing rest
- ☐ Loss of motivation or joy
- ☐ Increased headaches or body tension
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed by small tasks
- ☐ Withdrawing from others
- ☐ Feeling like you have nothing left to give

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF



Take small moments of pause throughout the day



Accept support when it is offered



Set gentle boundaries



Prioritize basic needs like sleep, hydration, and meals



Connect with supportive people



Practice grounding and self-compassion



Seek counselling support when needed



GENTLE REMINDER

You cannot pour from an empty cup.
Supporting yourself is not selfish, it is necessary.



GROUNDING TOOLS

for Families

Grounding tools help the body and mind back to the present moment during times of stress, overwhelm, anxiety or emotional dysregulation.



5-4-3-2-1 SENSES EXERCISE

Notice:

- 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



COMFORT ITEMS

- Soft blanket
- Stuffed animal
- Warm drinks
- Favorite calming objects



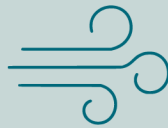
DEEP BREATHING

Try slow breaths

In for 4

Hold for 4

Out for 6



MOVEMENT

- Stretching
- Walking
- Jumping
- Shaking out
- tension



GROUNDING THROUGH CONNECTION

- Sit together quietly
- Hold hands
- Read a book together
- Use calming, reassuring words



GENTLE REMINDER

Regulation is often shared

Calm connection can help children feel safe enough to settle.

GENTLE REMINDER: Small moments of calm matter.

Grounding is not about perfection, it is about creating safety in the moment



BUILDING CONNECTION

After Hard Days

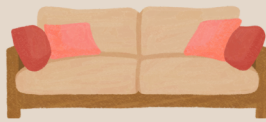
After difficult days, children and caregivers often need reconnection more than connection. Small moments of connection can help rebuild safety and trust.



GENTLE WAYS TO RECONNECT



Share a snack together



Sit quietly side by side



Read a story



Go for a walk



Watch a favorite show together



Draw or colour together



Offer a hug or comforting touch



Use calming and reassuring language

HELPFUL PHRASES

- ♡ "I'm here with you"
- ♡ "That was a hard day"
- ♡ "You are safe"
- ♡ "We can try again tomorrow"
- ♡ "I care about you even when things feel hard"

WHAT CHILDREN OFTEN NEED MOST

- Safety
- Consistency
- Patience
- Calm Presence
- Emotional connection



GENTLE REMINDER

Connection does not require perfection.
Healing often happens in ordinary moments of care and presence.