

Counselor's Corner
January 25, 2021

Calm Parenting in Stressful Times

The times we live in are super stressful, which means that frustration and anger may be inevitable. Overwhelmed with so many things, parents may find it easier than usual to lose their tempers with kids who are not on their best behavior either. When circumstances are not normal, parenting is extra hard. As this moment in time, it is more important than ever to get through daily demands, and manage as best we can in less than ideal circumstances. It is perfectly OK to lower expectations, and not be overly concerned if we can't do as much as we usually would, as parents, employees or partners. Experts recommend focusing on our own and our children's emotional states, and to concentrate on maintaining positive family dynamics.

Dr. Rebecca Schrag Hershberg, a clinical psychologist and parenting coach, notes that "Kids can't learn if they're not feeling safe and loved. If there's a strain in the connections at home and if it feels very tense and miserable, your child's brain isn't going to take in what they're learning because they're stressed and angry. Your relationship is the precursor for everything else falling into place."

Staying calm is not always easy. Since things are more stressful right now, clinical psychologist Dr. Stephanie Lee suggests that parents need to be extra conscious of their own "Big 3: diet/nutrition, activity level and sleep. These impact our mood, as well as our ability to problem solve, stay calm, concentrate and focus. If any of those things are really off, which is likely right now, it can have a major impact on your ability to be your best self."

No matter how we spin it, this is a difficult time. Dr. Lee advocates for reminding yourself that you are a good parent who is doing the best you can in a very difficult situation. She also proposes that we celebrate the small victories of each day, and surely there are plenty of those.