

Supporting yourself to support your child



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Today's session will cover

- Why do you need to support yourself
- The challenges with supporting yourself
- Strategies to support yourself to support your child
 - Resources

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The aim of today

To give you:

Help and Ideas
Comfort and Hope
A Reminder

What we won't be focusing on:

- Specific mental health problems for you and your child.
 - A professional focus

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Why are we talking about this?

What can it be like supporting a child with mental health problems

[Pixar Inside Out A Family Dinner Scene - YouTube](#)



- It can be emotional
- It can be lonely, strain our relationships with others and make communication difficult
- It can be confusing, tiring, frustrating and challenging
- It can be de-skilling
- It can affect the whole family
- It can stop you doing what you need to do and want to do

Why does it feel this way?

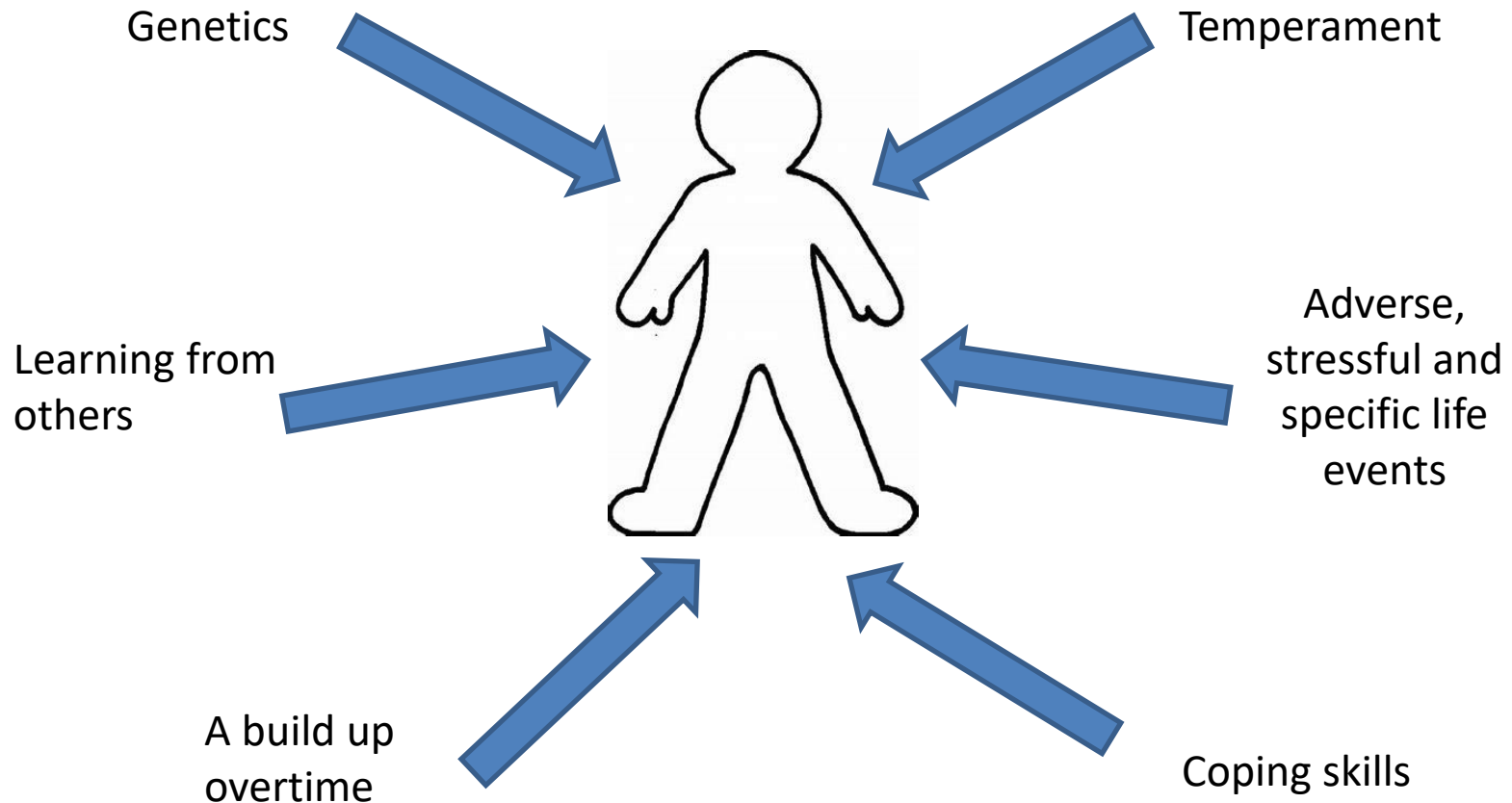
Our emotions are helpful.

- **Emotions help us communicate to one another** - we are biologically wired to be on the look out for others emotions to respond quickly and effectively
- **Emotions help us connect** – we are biologically wired to feel what others feel
- **Caregivers form a strong attachment and emotional bond to their child** - This continues throughout life and helps keep the child close to their caregiver to improve a child's chance of survival.

Therefore, when your child is emotionally struggling you will likely struggle too.

IT'S NORMAL!

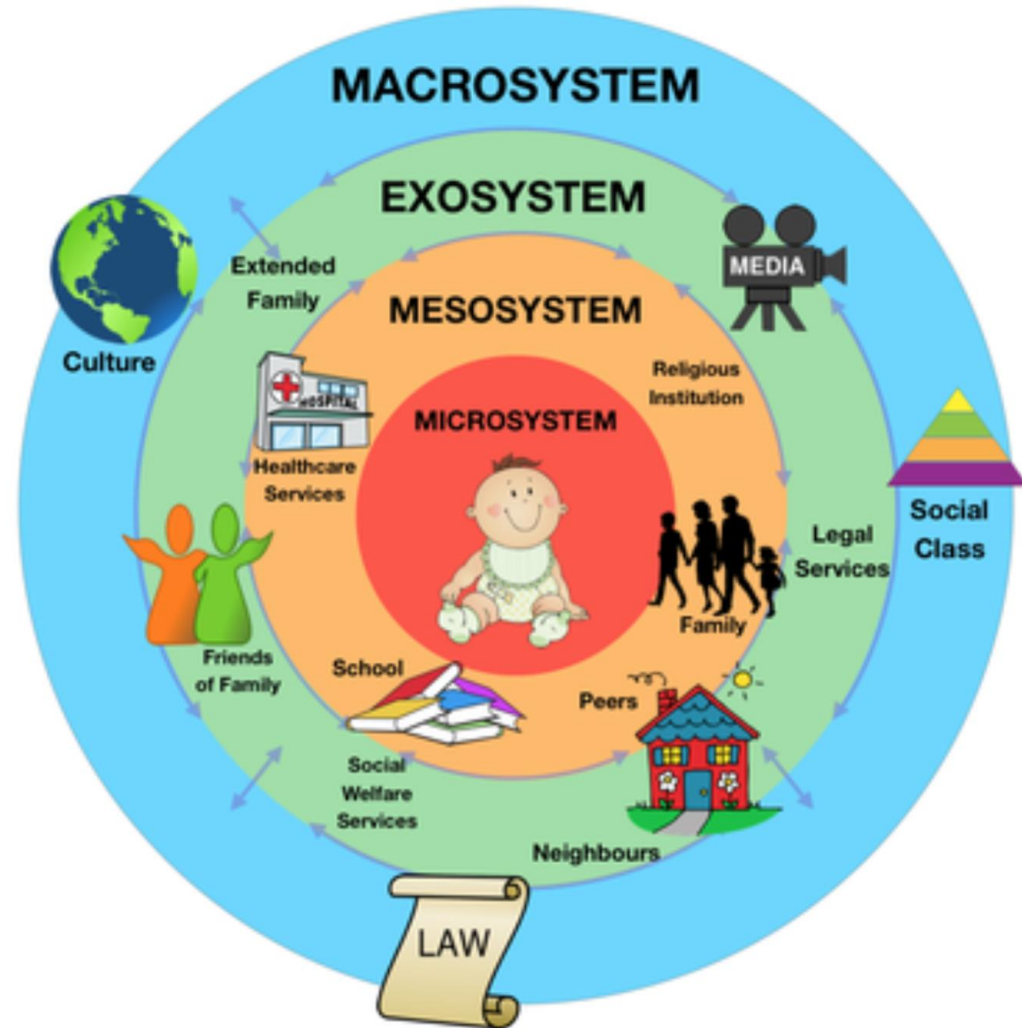
What causes child mental health difficulties?



The system around a child:

- Can impact children’s mental health
- Can support children to overcome mental health difficulties

Parents and carers are key to supporting children to overcome mental health difficulties, you know your child best!



However, it is hard and you need to look after yourselves to look after your child....

“...Place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping small children or others who may need your assistance.”



The barriers to parent wellbeing

- Being a parent and carer is hard in normal circumstances
- There is a lack of recognition, space and permission
- Parental stigma
- Cultural challenges
- Our beliefs of supporting our wellbeing, experiences of support and parenting
- The challenges in the system when seeking support
- Life is busy. Parents might have their own wellbeing challenges and current challenges in life i.e.. covid, work, relationship and financial challenges.

Notice what comes up for you today – What you think, how you feel and your response....

What can you do to support your own wellbeing?



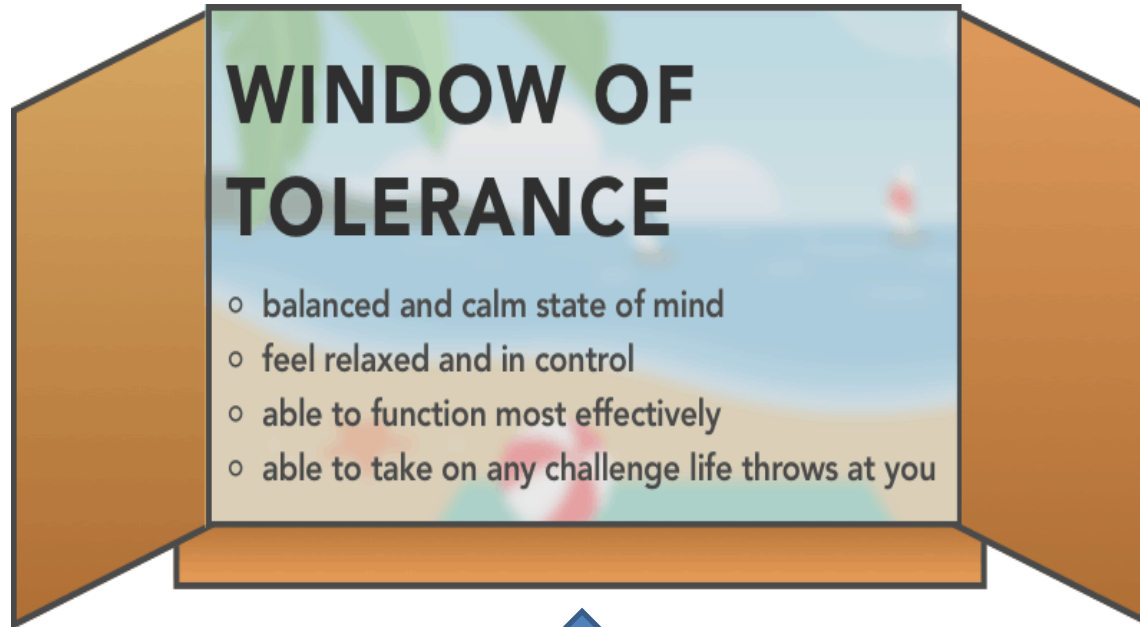
Thinking part of your brain switches off!



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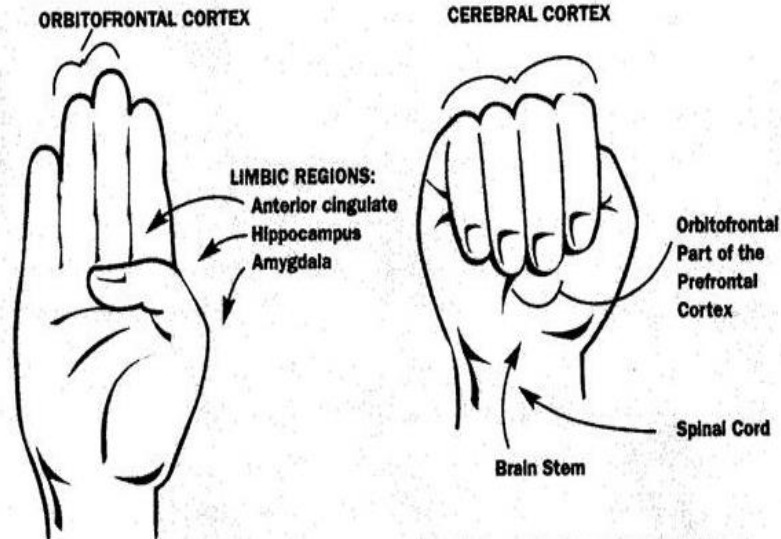
Hypo-aroused
shut down,
numb, passive,
withdrawn,
frozen, shame,
guilt



Hyper-aroused
hypervigilant,
fight/flight, tired,
guilt, irritability,
frustration

When you parent well and use your best strategies
When you are at your best and can support yourself well
When you can support your child best

“FLIPPING YOUR LID”

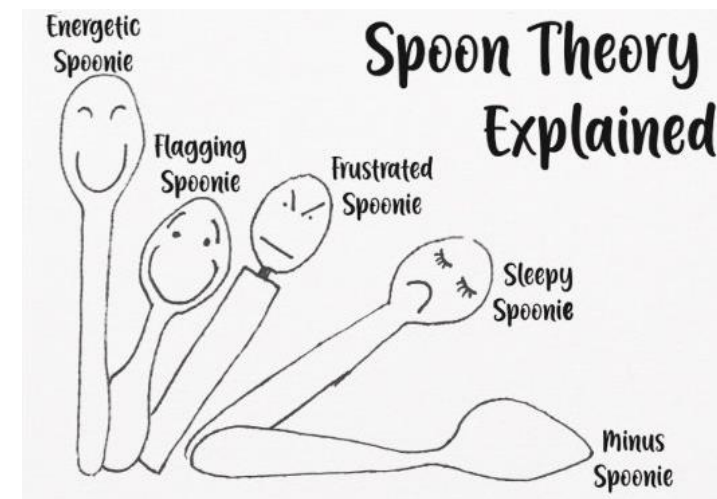




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THE BASICS

- **Supporting your basic needs** (i.e. eating, sleeping, medication) are fundamental to help you better support someone else
- **Find time** for small breaks and space to reflect
- **Prioritise small moments** for self-care, it has got to be simple!
- **Problem solve:** Focus on what you can control
- **Pace** what you do where possible
- **Be kind to yourself** if you can't do these



STOP, TAKE A BREATH & NOTICE

(Regulate yourself first and come back to your window of
tolerance)

1. STOP!

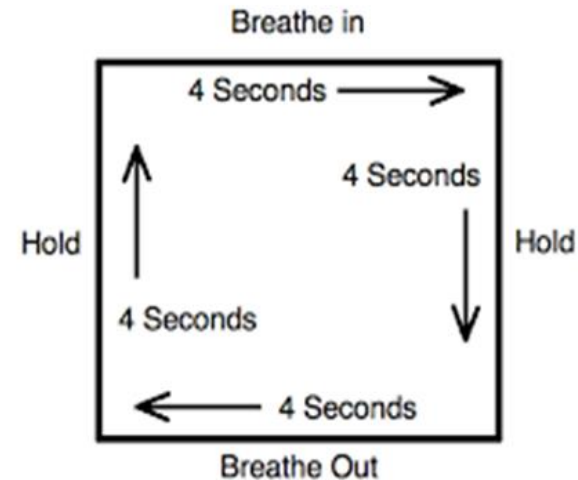
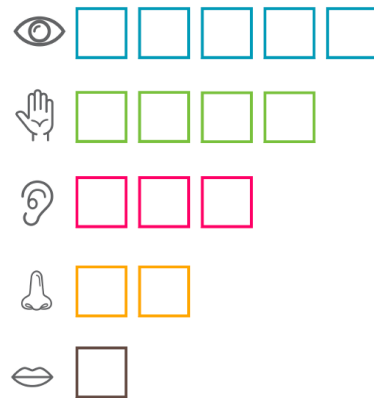


Stay calm and step away if
needed

2. TAKE A BREATH

- Breathing and grounding ourselves overrides the body's stress response and brings the rational thinking part of the brain back on line.
- We need to come back to our senses

54321 Grounding Exercise



3. NOTICE

- **How you are feeling**
 - How stressed are you?
- **Thinking habits**
 - Are you self-critical, catastrophising, comparing, how accurate are they?
- **Body sensations**
 - Where are you holding tension and your breath?
- **Ways of coping**
 - Are they helpful ways of coping with stress?
- **Triggers**
 - What increases your cup?



SELF SOOTHE

(Bring and keep your stress cup down!)

Engage in activities that help you self-soothe

- Activities that use your 5 senses
- Things you enjoy and give you a sense of achievement
- Activities in line with your values
- Mindful activities
- Connect with others
- Small pleasures that distract, refocus and help you reframe
- Activities that enhance gratitude

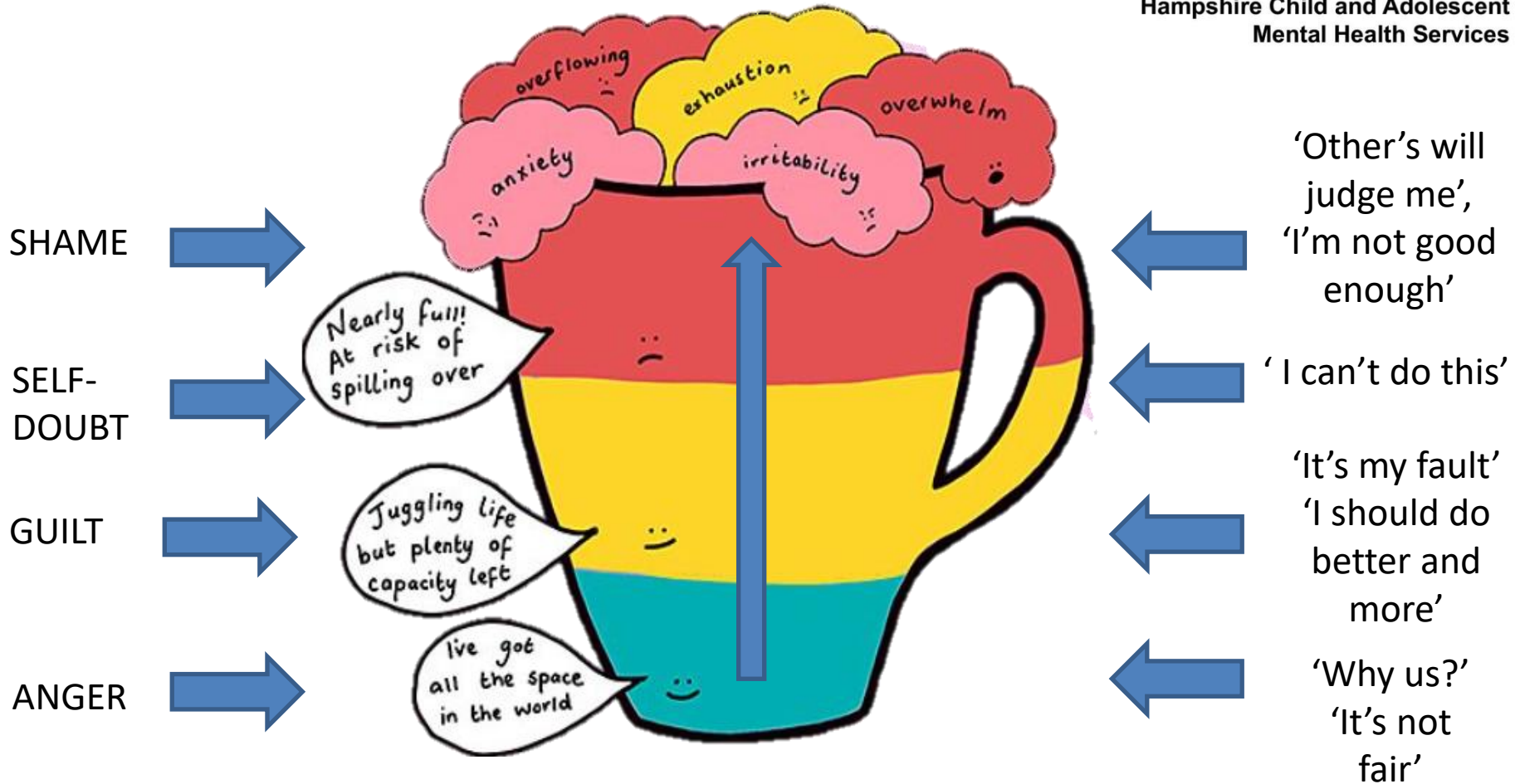
ANY IDEAS...?

TIPS TO SELF-SOOTHE AS A PARENT

- Be realistic
- Make them small and make adaptations
- Fit them into what you are already doing
- Consider how can you prioritise this and persevere
- Ask others to help
- Develop you own coping and self-soothe box

SELF-COMPASSION

(Show yourself empathy and kindness)



SELF-COMPASSION IS KEY

TIPS TO SELF-COMPASSION

1. Notice critical thoughts and self-doubt
2. Acknowledge what cannot be changed and how you feel about it
3. Focus on your own strengths and small wins
4. Be kinder to yourself where possible
 - *It's been hard to meet my basic needs at the moment so I might get things wrong*
 - *It's ok to get things wrong, I can take a step back and repair difficulties with your child when things are calm.*
 - *What would I say to your child or a friend?*
5. Allow yourself to be sad
6. Set realistic goals, focus on hope and the future
7. Seek professional help if needed

There are some great apps that can help you to do this



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WITH YOUR CHILD

(Supporting yourself and them)

- Support basic needs together
- Remember your basic parenting skills and PACE to make yourself and your child feel safe
- Set clear boundaries and untangle yourself
- Mend difficulties when things are calm



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PLAYFULNESS

ACEPTANCE



CURIOSITY



EMPATHY



- Problem solve difficulties together
 - Identify, ask, explore, learn
- Set family goals, celebrate small successes and strengths
- Set aside problem free time together
- These strategies can work for both of you, model them and practice together!



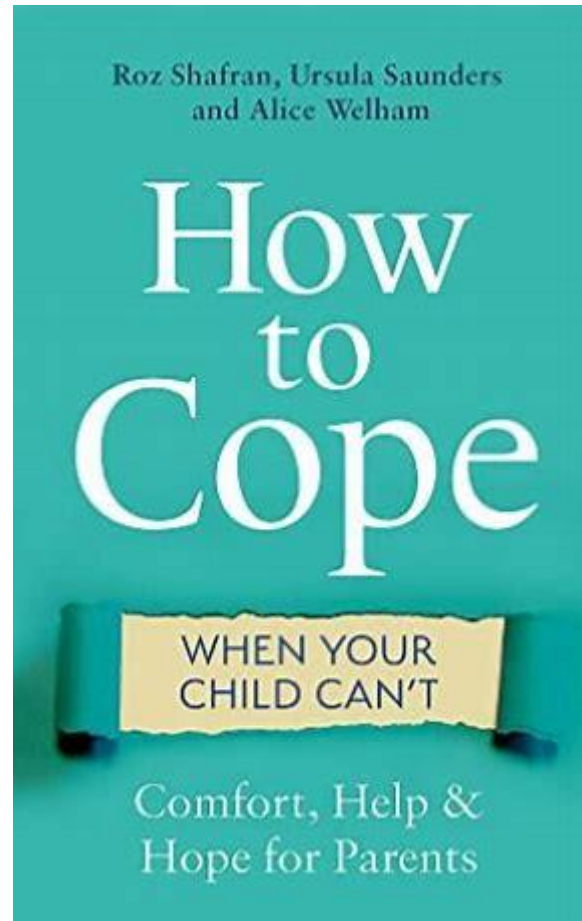
REMEMBER:

- Looking after a child with mental health difficulties can be hard
- Stop, self-soothe and be kind to yourself
- You are not alone and it is ok to ask for help
- Don't forget your parenting skills
- Looking after yourself is important!

RESOURCES

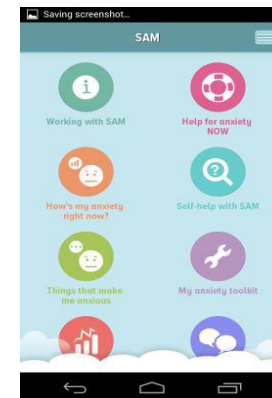


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Various APPs

- Mindshift
- Headspace
- ACT Companion: Happiness Trap
- Bloom
- Self help for anxiety management (SAM)
- Worry Box
- What's up – The Mental Health App



Please see our leaflets at the CAMHS stand
for more details and our website

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Thank you for listening



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