



PARTNERING FOR RESILIENCE



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Together we Thrive

Resilience & Posttraumatic Growth

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Many of us are thinking about how we'll change both during and after the pandemic. In light of this, it can be highly beneficial to think not only about dysfunctional responses, but also about healthy responses. After all, we're resilient beings who are hardwired to adapt to changing conditions of survival, and now is no exception. As a result, highly stressful life events are often associated with periods of grief and loss as well as with hopeful periods of readjustment and healing. For instance, most individuals report experiencing at least one positive change after a potentially traumatic event with the most frequently reported positive change being developing stronger personal relationships.



Two possible healthy response patterns that we might observe are: resilience, defined as maintaining some baseline functioning in the context of disruption (e.g., continuing to show up for work requirements in the new virtual environment), and posttraumatic growth (PTG), defined as improving some baseline functioning in the context of disruption (e.g., finding a new way to approach work itself in the new virtual environment).

Posttrauma Growth does not result from a highly stressful life event itself, but rather from our struggle with a "new reality." This is because the abrupt, and in the case of the pandemic, ongoing change generates new thinking and functioning patterns. While immersed in daily struggles during the pandemic, we may not view ourselves as being resilient or searching for growth, but instead we may simply be trying to survive physically and psychologically. Therefore, PTG may come as a surprise to some of us during or after. Posttraumatic Growth can manifest in a variety of ways, including:

An increased appreciation for life in general

A richer existential and spiritual life

An increased sense of personal strength

Changed priorities

More meaningful interpersonal relationships

Common Parental Struggles

This is a common problem we are seeing with children, thinking that if they are at home, they are on vacation from school, and they are not accountable for any school work. It is understandable that this is a challenging new system that everyone is getting adjusted to; however, children should be reminded that school is absolutely in session, albeit remotely. They are still required to complete all the assignments in a timely manner.

One common complaint is that they don't do the work because it is difficult for them as well as their parents to understand some of the remote learning lessons. If that is the case, please set a time with your child to talk to your child's teacher to get clarification. Since children are not used to this type of disciplined learning from home, it can be difficult to get them to sit down for extended periods of time to do their work. Therefore, set up a daily routine, but try to make their learning more fun and playful. It is important to remind them that they are still required to complete assignments as they would be if they were physically in school, but with more flexibility as their advantage. Some examples:



How do I let my child know that we're still in school and not on vacation? He thinks it's an extended break.

They can do their work in their pjs and in the order that they choose, possibly alternating preferred and non preferred assignments.

You can write each of their assignments for the day on individual sticky notes, and they can arrange the order they want to complete in by sticking the notes on a blank sheet of paper or board.

Depending on the age of your child, you can even use several sticky notes for one assignment (i.e. for an assignment requiring answering comprehension questions, you can have one sticky note for completing the reading, and another for answering the questions). When two of the sticky notes are completed, they can earn a favorite snack, or a 10 minute break.

You can have your child choose what he/she would like to work for. Please make sure to use a timer for the breaks, as it's easy for children to lose track of time when they are having fun. This will act in place of the bell that ends recess at school.


Whenever possible, try to arrange for a consistent work station for your child supplied with paper, pencils, flashcards, and their books, to make it feel similar to their desks at school.

Put away or turn off all possible distractions such as TVs, phones and iPads until their work is completed.

Remember that your children learn from you all the time, so feel free to incorporate their school work into daily living situations, which will help them make logical connections to their school assignments.

As children will have a harder time learning if they are feeling stressed, set up a work schedule, but please don't expect perfection, relax, and make their learning fun.

Common Parental Struggles



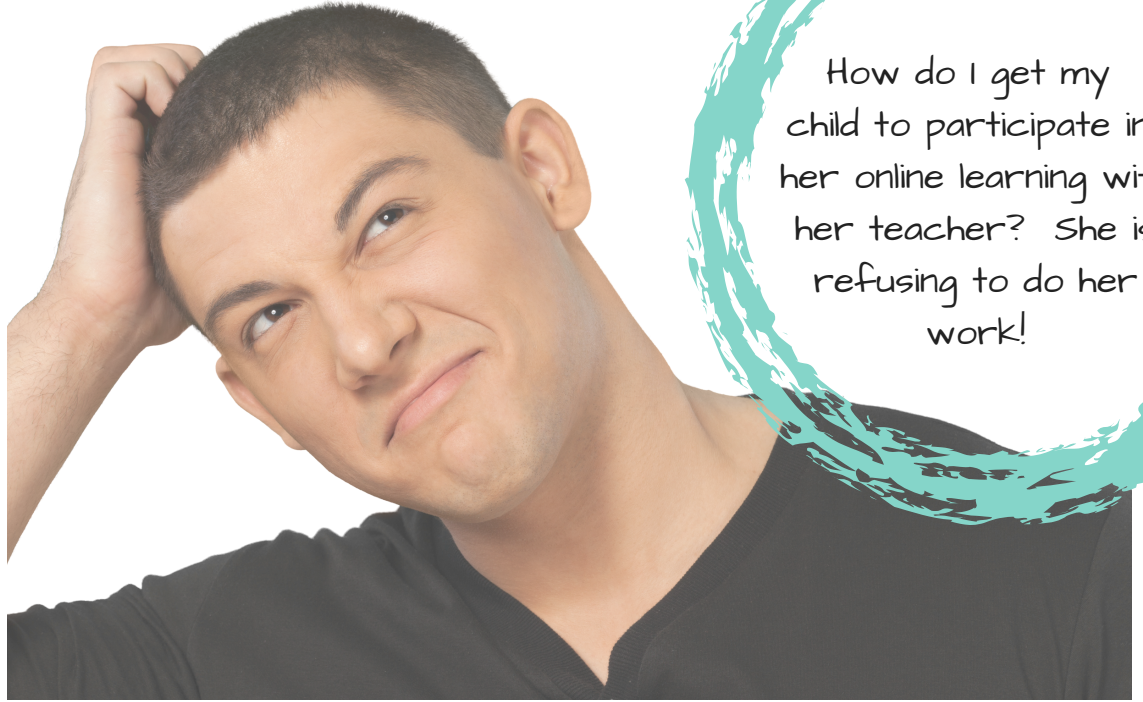
How do I socially connect my child with his peers?

As we all self-quarantine to keep ourselves and others safe during this health crisis, our worlds have become much smaller and isolated with few opportunities for social interaction and activity. For your children, school has been a place where they learn the social skills of how to get along with others and have the opportunity to practice it on a daily basis as they navigate the classroom and playground environments. Additionally, research has found that social relationships are crucial to reducing stress and feelings of loneliness and to maintaining one's physical and mental health.

It's important to find ways for your child to connect with friends and classmates. You and your child may be familiar with Zoom or Google Hangouts through their remote learning, as well as platforms like Skype and FaceTime. These are good platforms for your child to connect with peers (and extended family members too!) as you are able to monitor their activity and conversations, as opposed to using social media apps. You may ask your teacher if she/he can create an interest list for parents who would like to participate in a "virtual playdate".

Common Parental Struggles

First, you are not alone. This not only happens in the home environment, but also very often at school in the child's classroom. There are a number of strategies that parents can use that professional educators utilize on a daily basis. The following are suggested for students who may be having difficulty with motivation:



How do I get my child to participate in her online learning with her teacher? She is refusing to do her work!

One simple idea is to create a basic written contract with your child. If he/she completes 'X' amount of work, then the child may have access to a favorite reward for that day. It is important that rewards be as immediate as possible, especially for younger children, and why it's important to have daily reinforcers. The student should be allowed to pick his/her reward (within reason) and also should not be overtaxed with demands in the first few days. The simpler, the better (i.e. If Johnny engages and completes at least three 30-minute assignments throughout the day, then Johnny will be allowed to play his video games tonight).

This next method is more effective with younger students who may be in the primary grades. A parent can use a small individual white board to write out the 2, 3 or 4 tasks a student is asked to complete. For example: 1) write your name on the top; 2) solve math problems 1-3; 3) ask mom to check your work; and finally 4) finish solving problems 4-6. This would be written out as successive steps for the child to look at and step 5 could be the reward that the student chose. This method is to help alleviate stress and anxiety for students who have difficulty with learning on their own and tend to get overwhelmed when demands are placed upon them.

This method is the most effective and has been found to be useful with all students, but especially with those who have special needs or have severe difficulties with initiating a task which is common for very young students. It relies on the principles of momentum and can be adjusted as the student becomes more proficient with working on their own. You may want to use some type of board for your child to check to see what step he/she may be on. This strategy requires that the non-preferred work be tucked in between two preferred activities - acting as bookend supports or reinforcers. For example, if the student has not engaged in work for several days, the parent can develop a 4-step schedule, where the first two steps are preferred activities as well as the 4th, but with a non-preferred school assignment as the third step. The child should have input into their rewards to increase a sense of control and the probability that they will comply. The principles of psychological momentum will allow the student to increase their engagement with their schoolwork and can be adjusted to just two bookend rewards as the student becomes more efficient at completing work. The hope is that the student would eventually require only one reward at the end of the day as they develop improved work habits.

These strategies are meant to be flexible, but need to be adhered to with strong fidelity. Behavior does not change in a day, so you should not expect it to do so, but with persistence and consistency, they will have some effect. Remember to start slowly with your child. If he/she is not doing any work during the day, then having them engage with work for 10-15 minutes in a day is progress and can be built upon. The following link has also been provided to give parents some additional information about general strategies that can be used year round for your child:



<https://www.boystown.org/parenting/guides/Pages/school.aspx>

Common Parental Struggles

I'm feeling overwhelmed trying to be a parent and teacher while working full time. What should I do?



In this time of uncertainty, we all face uncharted territories. It's unrealistic to suddenly expect a parent to become an educator without any training and preparation. At this point, staying mentally and physically healthy is more important than learning the curriculum. If trying to get your child to do her work is causing stress, it is OK to skip and focus on the family. During a time of this pandemic it is a necessity to adapt to your new reality and to be more lenient. Some suggestions:

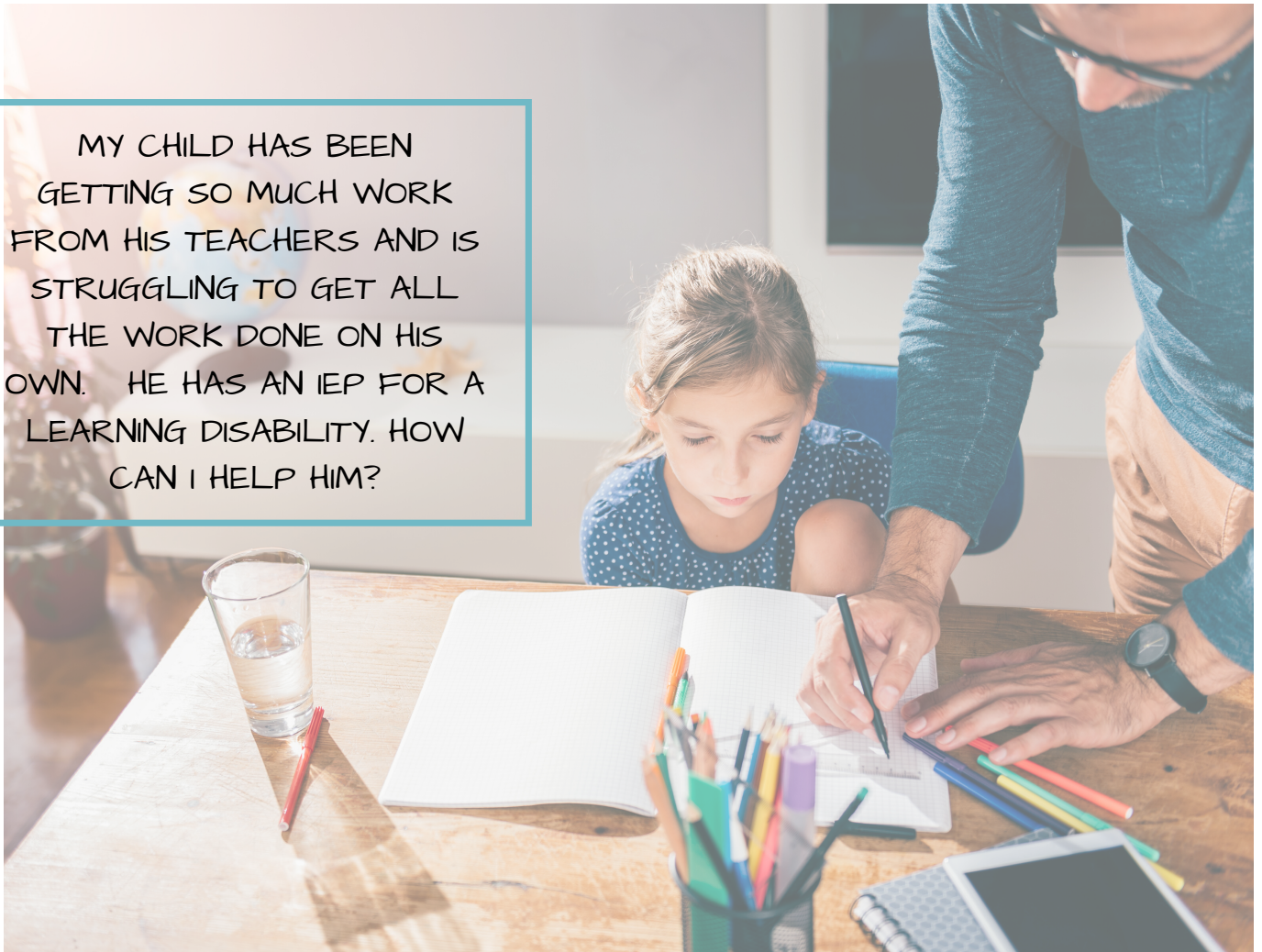
Allow more play time, even if it means more screen time so you can do some work. It is not going to be the end of the world and at the end you and your children will be happier. Cut your To Do List in half. Everyone is going to be less productive during this time.

If there are two parents at home, plan to work in shifts, especially if you have small children.

If getting your child to do all her work is too difficult, contact her teacher or school and ask them what is the most important work that she needs to get done for each day. Remember to give yourself a break and know that this is new for everyone and it is OK not to be perfect.

Common Parental Struggles

MY CHILD HAS BEEN GETTING SO MUCH WORK FROM HIS TEACHERS AND IS STRUGGLING TO GET ALL THE WORK DONE ON HIS OWN. HE HAS AN IEP FOR A LEARNING DISABILITY. HOW CAN I HELP HIM?



In your child's IEP, there is a section called accommodations and modifications. Look to see what boxes are checked. Some accommodations include reduced assignments and extended time to complete work. Check to see what accommodations your IEP team agreed on and discuss this with the teacher as to what this looks like for your child. Please communicate with your child's teachers to find out what will be the best balance of work for your child.

How to Keep Your Child Physically Active

You may notice your child becoming more and more sedentary. We are all stuck indoors for the majority of the day, as kids are occupied with remote learning and adults busy with their remote jobs. We may also be limited in our usual opportunities to be physically active, and we may be able to manage just a quick break or walk outside. Your child may be spending more time than usual on their tablets, phones, devices, and computers, and far less time than they typically would being physically active during a regular school day.

However, regular physical activity is important for our physical and mental health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "for children, regular physical activity helps support healthy growth and development and reduce the risk of disease in later life, and through regular activity, children can develop fundamental movement skills and build social relationships. Regular physical activity also improves mental health and can reduce the risk of depression...and improve overall feelings of wellbeing." The WHO's recommendations for physical activity for your child:



Children Ages 5 and Under

Children under 5 years of age: should spend at least 180 minutes a day in physical activities, with 3-4 year-olds being moderately or vigorously active for an hour a day.

Children & adolescents 5-17 Yrs.

all children and adolescents should do at least 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity, including activities that strengthen muscle and bone, at least 3 days per week.

Fun Games to Play Virtually

Scavenger Hunt

Pictionary

Heads up

Bingo

Charades

Trivia



VIDEO LINKS TO ADDRESS BEHAVIOR CONCERNS

FIRST-THEN BOARDS

Click on the following link to learn how to use “First-Then” boards. First-Then boards can be a useful tool to clarify expectations and provide motivation in a visual way.

[First Then Board Youtube Link](#)

TOKEN ECONOMY

Click on the following link to learn about token economies. A token economy is a visual representation of reward that's going to come later for behavior that you've done now.

[Token Economy Youtube Link](#)

REDUCING PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

You want the best for your family—to set up your kids and teens for success and create a happier, calmer family life. It's also very important to look after yourself as a parent. Here are some practical tips and strategies that will help.

[Parenting Tips Poster](#)

CALMING DOWN

The following link highlights useful strategies that may help parents respond to children who become upset at home.

[Calming Down Youtube Link](#)

Fun Activities to Support Children with Anxiety

KRISTIN O'ROURKE, LCSW



This activity is one that children will ask you to do again and again, and it will actually provide them with some comfort in their time spent away from you or their loved ones. Buy oven bake clay at your local craft store and have the children choose up to three colors that make them feel calm or happy. As they roll the colors into a ball and then gently push their thumb print into it, talk to the child about what this stone symbolizes for them; perhaps include a reminder to breathe, a positive thought, or a favorite mantra such as, "I can get through this". After it is baked for 30 mins at 250 degrees, it can be kept in their pocket and used in difficult moments as a reminder that they are safe and in control. Parents can even involve themselves in this activity and make a worry stone as a transitional object for kids who are having trouble separating. (Note: Most of the time, the stones are made in therapy, but baked at home).

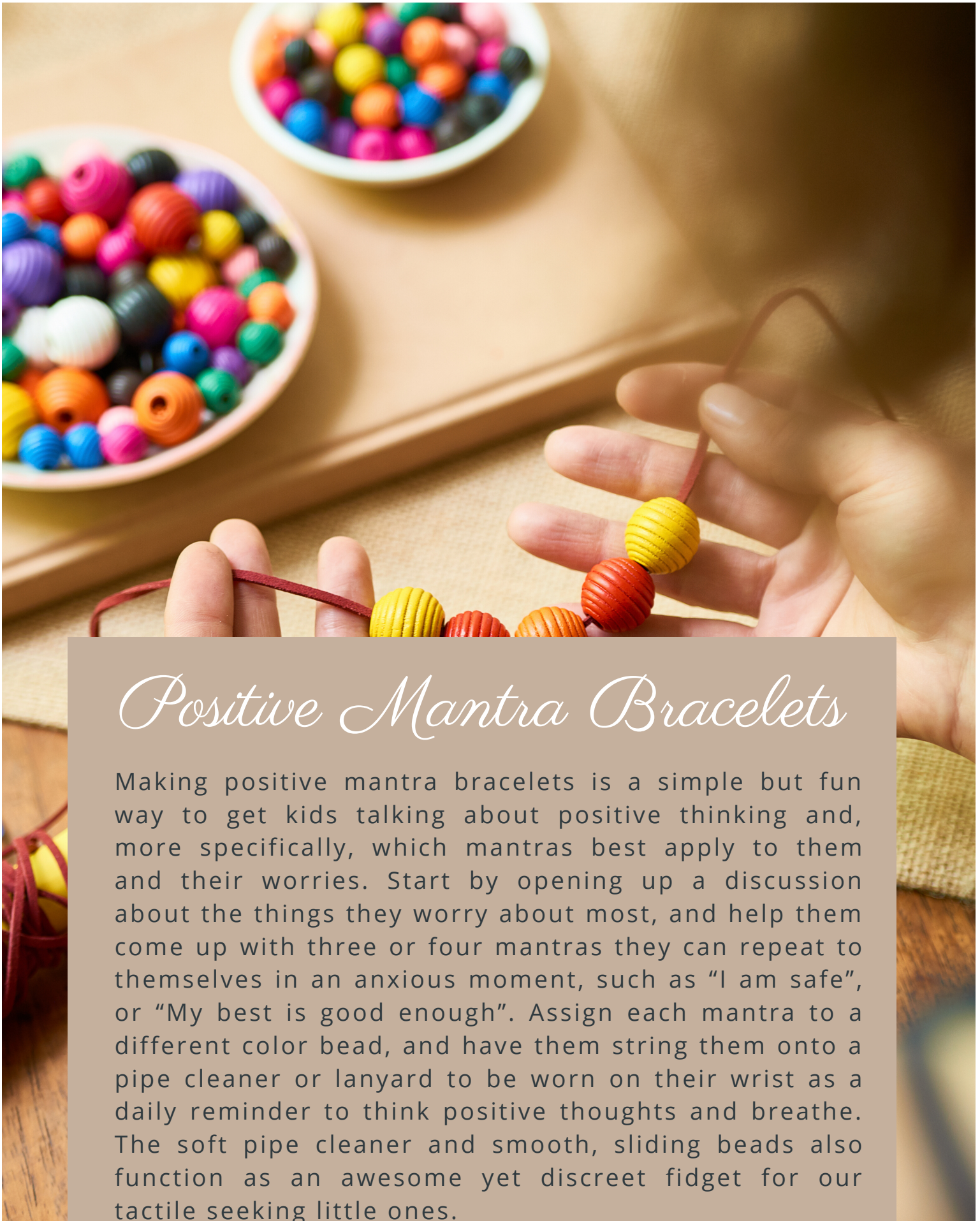
Worry Stones



Calm Down Jars

Another fun activity that kids love to do is make “calm down jars”. Throw some warm water, glitter glue and glitter in a glass (or even better, plastic) jar and have your kids shake it up to watch the glitter slowly float to the bottom. It is incredibly soothing and relaxing to watch and kids can use it at home after a difficult or stressful moment. Encourage them to do some deep breathing as they watch as well incorporate some mindfulness. Smaller versions of the calm down jars can be made by using small plastic baby oil bottles and can be kept in the car or in Mom’s purse for a quick relaxation tool on the go.

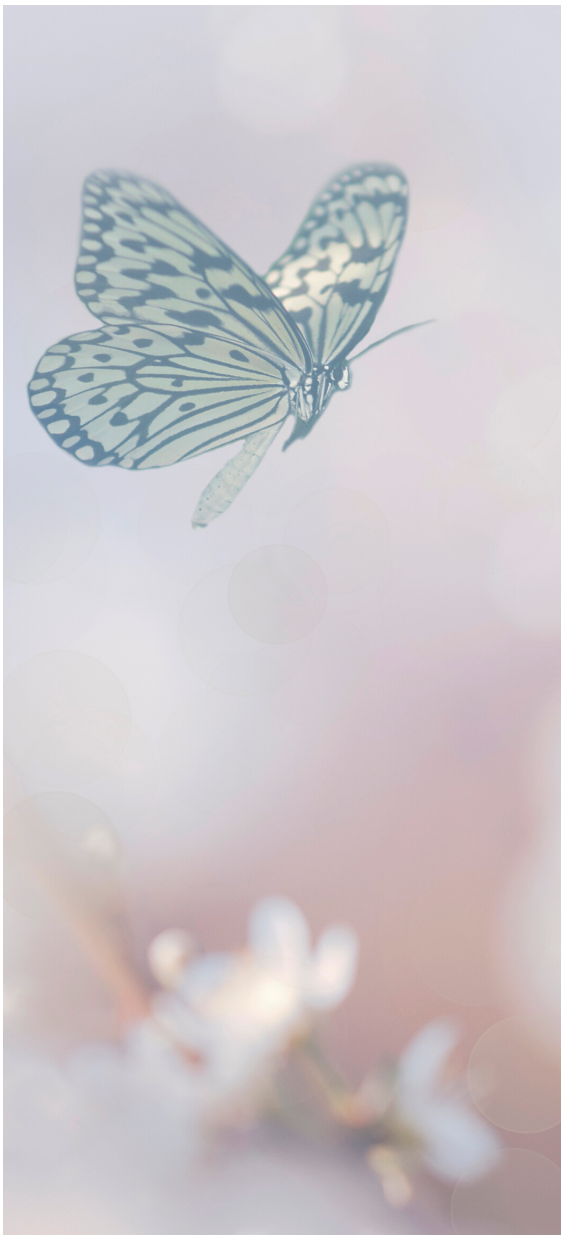




Positive Mantra Bracelets

Making positive mantra bracelets is a simple but fun way to get kids talking about positive thinking and, more specifically, which mantras best apply to them and their worries. Start by opening up a discussion about the things they worry about most, and help them come up with three or four mantras they can repeat to themselves in an anxious moment, such as “I am safe”, or “My best is good enough”. Assign each mantra to a different color bead, and have them string them onto a pipe cleaner or lanyard to be worn on their wrist as a daily reminder to think positive thoughts and breathe. The soft pipe cleaner and smooth, sliding beads also function as an awesome yet discreet fidget for our tactile seeking little ones.

Butterflies in the Belly



This butterfly in my belly activity is a non-threatening way to open up discussions with kids about their worries or fears. Draw and cut out butterflies of all different sizes in advance and trace the child's head and torso on a large piece of paper. Talk to the child about the physical sensations they feel in their body when they feel worried, such as butterflies in their belly. Ask them to write down different things they stress about on the butterflies and use the various sizes for big or little worries. End with a discussion about what calm down strategies to use when the "butterflies in their belly" show up and write them down in a butterfly net to symbolize "catching the butterflies".



Slime

Slime is all the rage and a quick google search will produce hundreds of recipe variations. The cool part about making slime is that kids find the process super fun, but it is also an awesome therapeutic tool for our sensory seeking kids. Add some lavender oil into the slime as an additional bonus to calm them as they play. Just a few minutes of running the slime through their fingers can bring a child's baseline level of anxiety down a few notches.



Stress Balls

Stress balls are a true fan favorite, and you'll be hard pressed to find a child who does not enjoy this activity. Fill a balloon with flour, rice, orbeez, or play dough using a small funnel, tie the end, and make sure to double wrap it into another balloon for extra security. Stress balls make for a great fidget for our nervous kids.

Museums You Can Virtually Visit

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Scroll through an extensive trove of 3-D photographs from the Minneapolis Institute of Art, explore online exhibits from the National Women's History Museum in Virginia, or admire artistic masterpieces from the Dalí Theatre-Museum in Spain.



THE MUSEO NACIONAL THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA

Users can take a virtual tour of the entire building (or a thematic tour covering such topics as food, sustainability, fashion and even "inclusive love"); browse current and closed exhibits; and watch behind-the-scenes videos featuring interviews, lectures and technical studies.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART, KOREA

the MMCA is now offering a virtual tour of its collections. This experience takes visitors through six floors of modern and contemporary art from Korea and around the world. Those seeking an educational walkthrough can follow along by tuning into curator-led recorded tours.



Museums You Can Virtually Visit

THE ANNE FRANK HOUSE

To delve deeper into the story detailed in Frank's diary, online visitors can watch videos about her life; virtually explore the Secret Annex; look around the house where she lived before going into hiding; and view the Google Arts and Culture exhibition "Anne Frank: Her Life, Her Diary, Her Legacy."



THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

Virtual visitors can tour seven different sections of the sprawling complex, enjoying 360-degree views of the Sistine Chapel, perhaps best known for Michelangelo's ceiling and Last Judgment fresco; Raphael's Rooms, where the Renaissance artist's School of Athens resides; and lesser-known but equally sumptuous locations such as the Pio Clementino Museum, the Niccoline Chapel and the Room of the Chiaroscuro.

THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

The building itself, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, is an architectural masterpiece; audiences can listen to an audio guide of its history or journey up its spiral halls via a Google Arts and Culture virtual tour.



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