



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

PARENT KIT

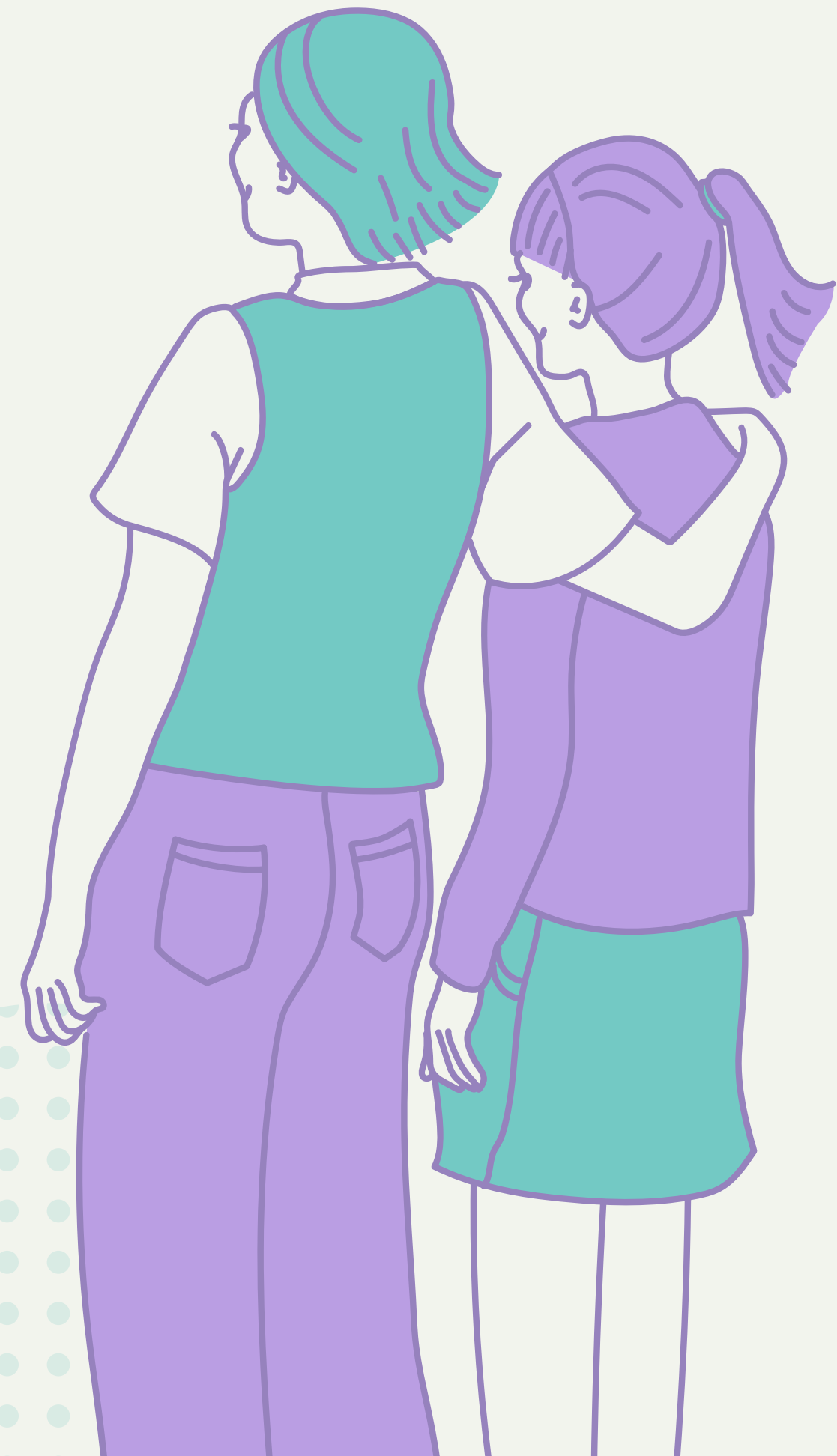
Journeying Through Challenging Times, Together

When the going gets tough, you need someone to be there for you, to listen to you and understand you.

For our children, that someone is us. To show them that we love them as much during their bad days as good.

This issue of **Parent Kit** helps you identify signs of stress in children and provides suggestions for support you can offer.

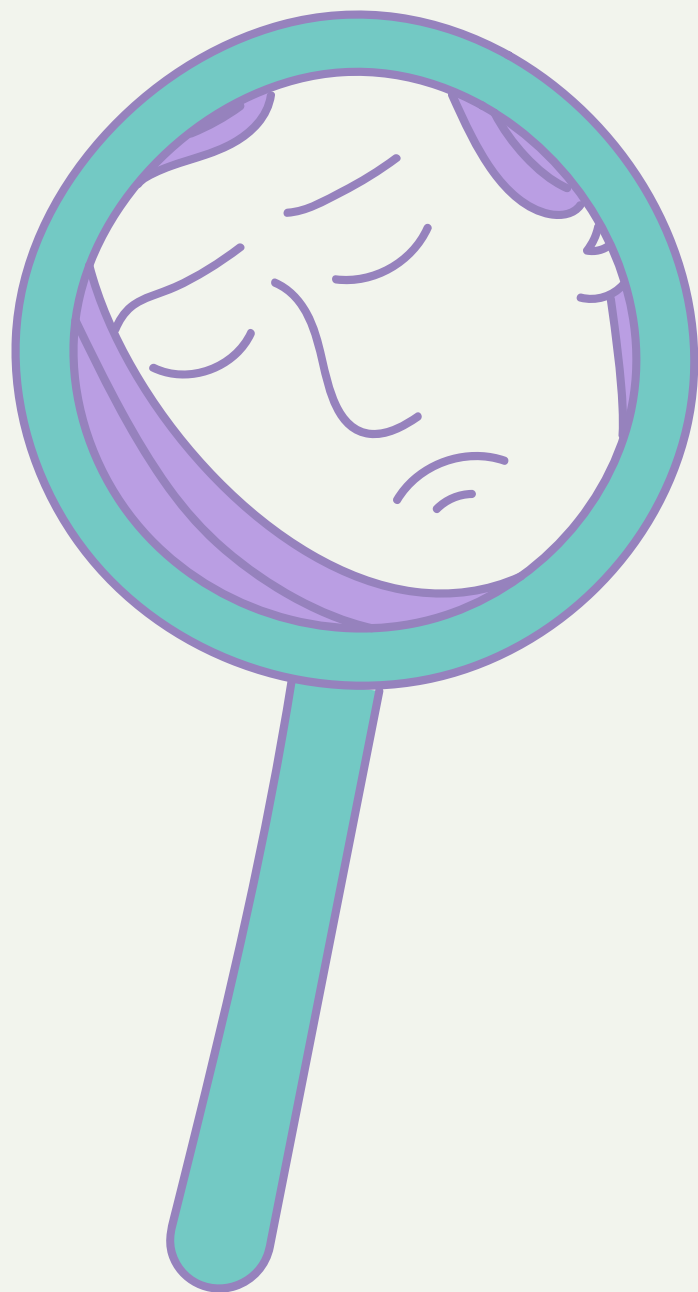
Remember, it is not about having a ready solution to every problem, but facing challenges together and growing through the experience.





Is your child having trouble with stress?

How can you tell?



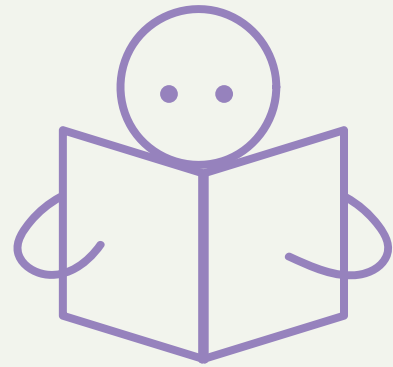
Signs of stress

- Sudden behavioural changes
- Mood swings or sulkiness
- Acting out or being rebellious
- Becoming withdrawn and avoiding others
- Struggling to pay attention to studies or activities
- Recurrent stomach aches and headaches
- Stark changes in sleeping and eating patterns
- Making excuses to miss school



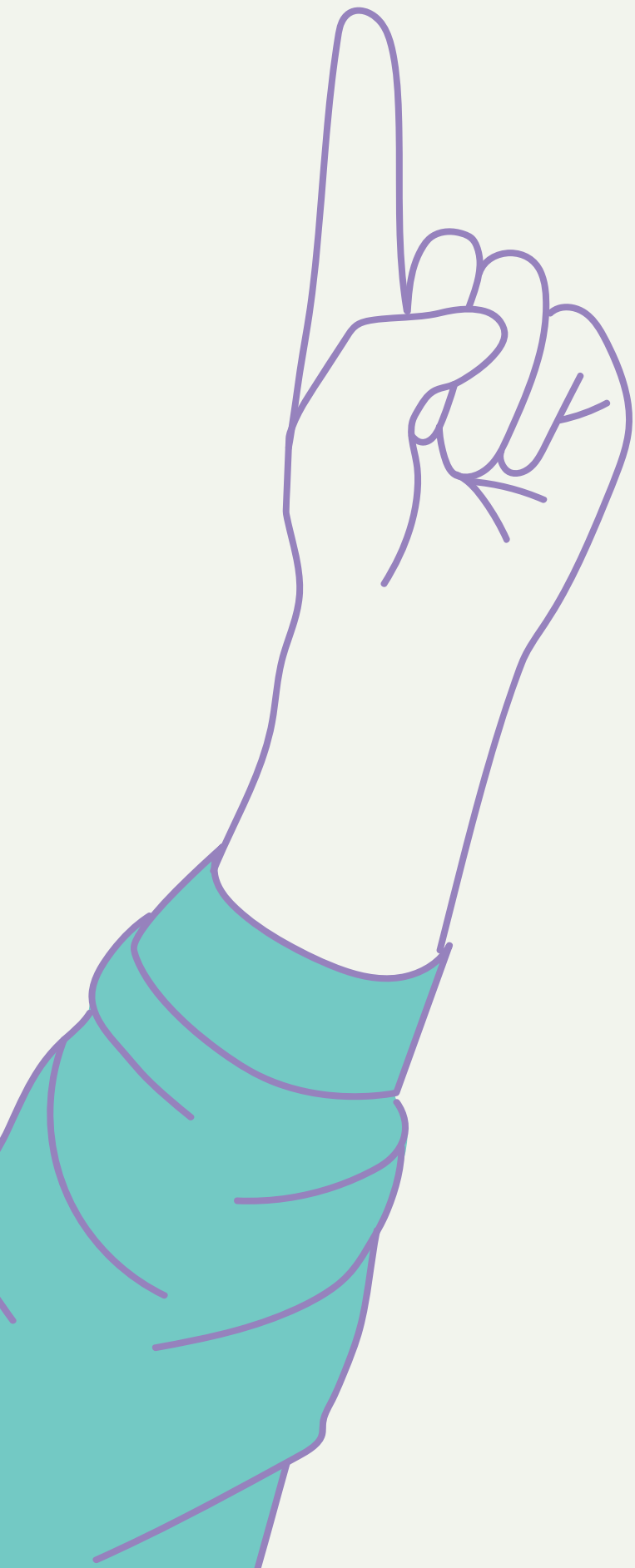
What are the 4 common sources of stress?

How can you help?



Academic pressure

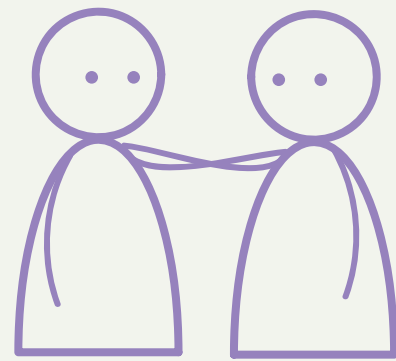
- **Focus on affirming** their efforts, not just results.
- **Celebrate small successes**, let them know you care.
- **Encourage a growth mindset.**
(e.g. say “What is one thing you have learnt from this mistake” instead of “This is wrong. Do it this way.”)
- **Guide your child** to set consistent and realistic expectations.





What are the 4 common sources of stress?

How can you help?



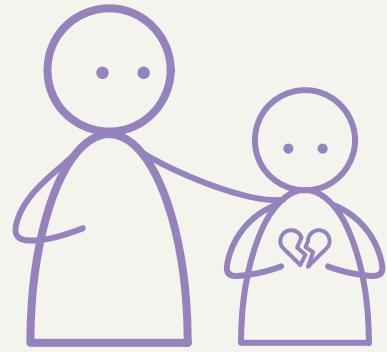
Stress in friend and family relationships

- **Encourage** your child to share their troubles with you, so you can guide them.
- **Offer practical solutions** rather than say, "Don't worry, it'll be ok."



What are the 4 common sources of stress?

How can you help?



Feelings of loss and grief

- Let your child know that **it is okay to grieve** over a loss.
- **Explore healthy ways** in which they can express grief. (e.g. *by journaling, painting, writing a song etc.*)
- Parents can also **reach out to the school** to work together in supporting the child. (e.g. *Form Teacher, School Counsellor*)

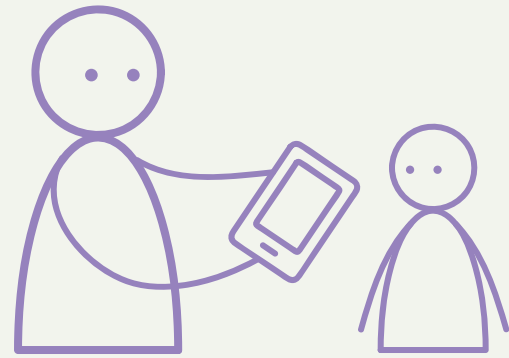
[CLICK HERE
to learn about
dealing with grief](#)





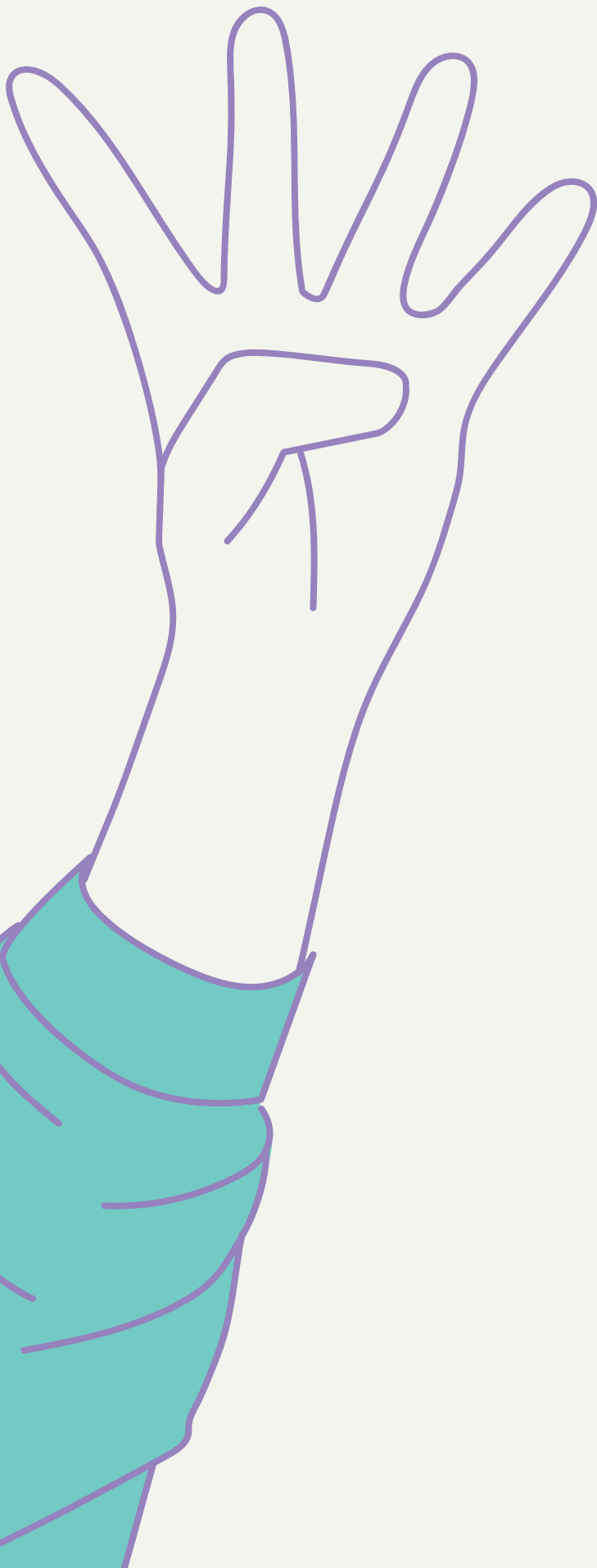
What are the 4 common sources of stress?

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Online comments and pressure

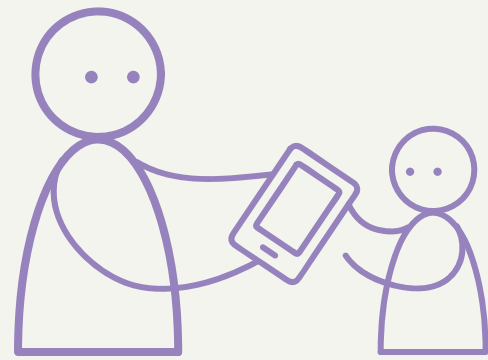
- **Guide them** to recognise false, unhealthy, negative or dangerous content online, especially content that may hurt their self-esteem.
- If they are troubled by what they see online:
 - **Tell them you're glad** they approached you about it
 - **Don't focus on or blame them** for how they accessed the content
 - **Acknowledge their concerns and feelings**; don't dismiss them even if they seem trivial to you
 - **Reassure them** that it's normal to be feeling the way they do (e.g. *scared, angry, upset, confused*)





What are the 4 common sources of stress?

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Online comments and pressure

- **Help them understand** that what is online may not always be an accurate portrayal of the real world.
- Questions they can ask:
 - Is what you are seeing real/accurate?
 - Who is sending this message?
 - What is their motivation?
 - What ideas and values are being promoted?
 - What do they want from you?
 - How does it make you feel?



Support your child during moments of visible distress by practising **CHEER**



- **Calm** your child down by speaking in a gentle tone, sitting them down to talk, and even hugging them, if needed
- **Hear** out their issues to understand their perspective
- **Empathise** with how they may be feeling in the moment
- **Encourage** them to seek help if the problem is complex
- **Reassure** that you will always be there to listen to their problems





How can you encourage conversation?

Give them space to speak

- Try to have the conversation when **everyone is feeling relaxed**.
- **Listen attentively**, nod, make eye contact, ask questions – these small cues will let them know you are trying to understand.
- **Reserve your opinion** and advice till later.





How can you encourage conversation?

Get them to open up

- Let them know **it is a safe space**.
- **Respect** their responses.
- **Give them time** to process any new information and perspectives.
- Your child may prefer to go to friends or relatives with their problems. Help by **expanding their support circle**.
- Being able to **provide socio-emotional support** for your child will also help them relate better to their peers.

[CLICK HERE!](#) 

- For more ideas on **how to encourage meaningful conversation:**

[CLICK HERE!](#) 



How can you create the right environment?

Connect regularly

- **Set aside time** to connect with your child every day. (e.g after dinner)
- **Plan** weekend activities.
- **Make** this your special time together, to share stories or hear their concerns.

Look after your own emotions

- **Ensure** you are not feeling stressed or anxious before you check in with your child. Remember, our emotions can rub off on them!
- **Recognise** your limits, take breaks, and protect yours and your child's mental health.



Explore new activities together – it may help your child to express their feelings better.



Here are some things you can try:

- **Take walks**
- **Exercise** or play sports
- **Play** board games or video games
- **Write/draw** with them

Get support if you need to – you are not alone. Here are some resources and helplines available.



Plant a “Resilience Tree”

with your child as an activity to practise expressing their feelings. [CLICK HERE!](#)



“The Tapping Solution for Parents, Children & Teenagers”

to learn how to counter stress and grow in resilience as a family. [CLICK HERE!](#)

CLICK HERE
to see the full
list of helplines



The parenting journey is not an easy one. Be there for your child, but practise self-care, too.

Remember to

- Acknowledge your challenges
- Discuss your problems with loved ones
- Set aside me-time to recharge

“ Let us walk together with our children on this journey and be there for one another. ”



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