

Crisis Connection

Parenting During Times of Stress



If you have been through a crisis in your relationship and you have children you are probably under an extra amount of stress. When children's routines are upset they often begin acting out. It is very common, for instance, for children to go back to behaviors that they had outgrown such as bed wetting or thumb sucking. They may also cling to you, whine a lot, or fight with other children.

Coping with these behaviors is hard when you are upset yourself. We would like to suggest some ways to help your child at this time:

- 1) Extra attention is very important. Children need to know that mom still loves them, even if their world has been turned upside down. Hugs, talks and time spent playing with them are ways to do this. Reassure them that you love them and that everything will be okay.
- 2) Don't turn to your child for support, understanding or help at this time. Let the child be a child, and you be the grown up. Don't discuss your relationship with your husband or boyfriend with the child. Don't try to get him/her to agree with your decision to leave or to end the relationship.

- 3) Ignore episodes of bed wetting. Calmly clean up the child and the bed but don't yell or tell the child he or she is bad or acting like a baby. It will stop when the child is more secure.
- 4) No yelling! It is easy to let your frustration with your situation cause you to be short-tempered with your child. This will make your child more upset and he or she will act out more, not less. A whining child needs reassurance, not correction. You need to stop children from fighting, but it is better to suggest another activity than to punish them. Play a game with both children until they calm down.
- 5) It works much better to make a habit of telling a child only once what you want done. Then get up and lead the child where you want the child to be. If you tell the child to sit down, for instance, say so one time. If the child disobeys, quietly lead him by the hand to the chair and say "Sit." If the child doesn't pick up the toys when told to, lead the child to the toy and say "Pick it up." It works like magic!
- 6) Praise a child every chance you get. They will want more of that kind of attention and will do things to earn it.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with acceptance and friendship, they learn to find love in the world.

Crisis Connection Inc.
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