Parenting While Managing Depression and Anxiety

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Parenting With Anxiety And Depression

Parenting is difficult even on your best days. But when you live with both depression and anxiety, being a good parent might seem impossible.

It doesn't have to be, however, living with anxiety and depression doesn't make you any less loving or effective in your parenting. In fact, I find it makes me a better parent because I try even harder to be in tune with my children's needs and emotions.

If you are a parent living with both anxiety and depression, here is what you need to do to help you manage your parenting despite your emotional health.

Understand That "Good Enough" Is Perfectly Fine

Depression and anxiety make parenting harder and you cannot always give 100 percent. Somedays will be harder than others and you are not required to be a super parent every single day.

Just do the best you can, and accept that good enough is perfectly fine.

Celebrate Your Strengths

As you are struggling with your emotional health, you may not think about your strengths. But it is important to celebrate all the things that make you great, especially when it feels like everything else is going wrong, and you don't feel adequate in your parenting.

Forgive Yourself

One of the hardest things for so many of us is forgiveness. Forgive yourself when things are too much, and when you don't handle them as well as you could have.

You can't even start to work towards managing your emotional health if you don't forgive yourself. None of us are perfect, so love yourself as you are, and forgive yourself for what is out of your control.

Be There for Your Kids

You know firsthand depression and anxiety make it tough to be there for the people you love, but you have to keep trying, especially when it comes to your children. Be there for bedtime, and in the morning, and on special occasions, even when takes everything you have got.

Even on my darkest days, I got up because my kids needed me. The need to be there for them was somehow stronger than my need to stay in bed.

Make Time for Yourself

Just as it is important for you to be there for your children, it is also important to find time for yourself. And it might be hard to make that time, but it is the best thing you can do for yourself and your children.

If you don't take care of yourself, you won't able to take care of anyone else. So, make time, even if it is just a 10-minute bubble bath or a short walk.

Know your Triggers

We all have triggers that make us sad, angry, or anxious. It has taken me some time to realize what my triggers are and how they lead to anxiety attacks or outbursts of crying and anger.

If you know your triggers, you can work to avoid them or deal with them in appropriate ways. For example, if you find yourself getting upset in front of your children, walk away and take some deep breaths, or if you start to have an anxiety attack in your car, pull over to a safe location, and open a window to get fresh air.

Be Open – Even with Your Children

I have struggled a lot with being open when it comes to my depression and anxiety. It took so long to admit it to myself, to my doctor, and loved ones, and to get help, but opening up has taken a big weight off my shoulders

Be honest with the important people in your life and get the help you need and deserve.

You should also be honest with your children. Of course, make sure the information is age appropriate.

Younger children can understand that Mommy, or Daddy, is sad or anxious because of a health condition, and older children may have questions and want to talk about anxiety and depression.

Being honest helps children to understand their parents better and to better identify and express their own emotions. Moreover, your children get to see you as a human being who struggles, but loves them and is still there for them.

Try to Be Positive

When I am feeling depressed or the anxiety is consuming me, I can be a negative person. Nothing seems right, I hate everything, and I just want to be left alone to wallow in my pity.

But even on the worst days, I remind myself my children are watching, and they need to see and hear positive things from me.

Sometimes, it is easy to find the positive and other days, I must dig deep inside to find the answers. But no matter how hard things get, I know there are good and positive things in my life.

Your Children Love You

The one thing that will never fail is your children's love. Even when the anxiety makes harder to focus and breathe, or when the depression makes you angry or sad, they love you.

They love you when they are upset with you when you yell at them, and even when you punish them, and even if they say they hate you.

Your children love you– depression, anxiety and all. They will forgive you for messing up or you're losing your temper.

I remind myself of this every single day. The love of my children what gets me through all of this.

You Will Get Through This

Living with anxiety and depression day in and day out is hard, and so, is raising children. Doing both at the same time can sometimes feel like an impossible feat.

But you will get through this, and your children will be fine. I promise you won’t mess them up.