



Guiseley School

How are You?

Hello all. I'm writing this on the morning after the government's announcement on easing the lockdown, but only slightly, and how for many of us, life will remain the same for quite some time. For some, lives are going to suddenly change and some parents will be trying to navigate going back to work suddenly. There is naturally a lot of confusion about what is allowed and what isn't etc but I hope by the time you receive this we will all have much more clarification. With all this going on I would like to focus on this week us taking a breath, pausing for a moment and having a reboot.



Self-Care: Recharge and Reboot!

If some of you felt like me yesterday you may feel a bit flat and that's understandable. At the start of all this we were naturally fully aware that we were at the beginning of this journey and put a lot of energy into making it work for our families. Many of us are facing more time at home and it almost feels like we've hit a hurdle we need to find the energy to jump over. However you felt last week, it's okay, I know I say that a lot but it genuinely is. This week let's try and push forwards with the same vigour we have already been doing the last two months, but this time I hope you remember to care for yourself from the get-go.

Reflect - This is the perfect time to ask yourselves, what's worked for your family so far and what hasn't? In the first week I held a

family meeting, two days later we had to have a family meeting about the disaster of the first one. This time I went back with a whiteboard and markers! Finally, we drew up some rules, chores and expectations etc and for a while this worked but last night, I noticed the writing is smudged on the chart stuck to the fridge, people aren't doing what they were originally meant to. It all needs doing again with fresh eyes. Other things to look at is how working from home is going for those of you that are. Can anything be tweaked to make it more manageable and flow better with family life? How are your children doing with home schooling? There is no right or wrong way, each child will have their own rhythm and I will be encouraging them this week through their letter to look at



how they're working and what could they do to make things better for them.

Have the conversations you need to with your family members, if things are going to remain the same for you or if things are going to change, e.g. if some of you are going back to work. What can you do collectively as a family to make sure everyone's needs are met these next few weeks without burning yourself out?

Make a list of all the things you wish you had done differently if lockdown had suddenly been lifted. Now make that list as a priority for you to try and incorporate some of these things into the next few weeks. For me it is definitely quality time with my children. I want to bake with my year 7 daughter, I want to go out more with my year 10 son, even having more conversations with him would be great. I want to laugh more with them. The days seem like sand sometimes and can disappear quickly. Will we suddenly turn into the Von Trap family (there's certainly enough of us!) overnight? Not a chance. I am however going to try and make more time somewhere to feel more connected with my children.

Mood Boosters - Yes, needing a lot of these right now! Everyone's mood boosters will be different but a few that work for many and are easy to access are:

Choose your viewing wisely - Stay away from the news channels that run 24 hours a

day, this will drain your energy massively. Choose something that will make you smile and laugh. I think we all need as much comedy as we can get right now.

Music - Make different playlists on your phones or other devices for different moods such as when you wake up, when you want to motivate yourself and when you want to relax.

Clothing - It sounds shallow but it isn't. Putting on a favourite outfit and putting minimal make up or hair products on can make a huge difference to your mood and motivation levels. If we look in the mirror and feel we look like our old selves, our functioning and mood will rise.

Savouring - The moments where you catch you and your children laughing over something silly, or watching your children actually getting along for more than ten minutes at a time, savour them.

Gratitude - At the end of every day think of one thing you are grateful that the day brought you. It highlights the light even if the day has felt dark.

I wish I had all the answers for how you're all feeling right now, naturally I don't but I can say; look after yourselves and make the changes you need to find the energy to push yourself over this hurdle-you've got this.



Light in The Lockdown!

Remaining with the theme of this week I would like to highlight kindness. There have been so many acts of kindness over the last two months you could easily write a book on them. For this week I would love it if you could focus your acts of kindness on those within your own household. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying there isn't already an abundance of kindness in your home but I think it would be lovely if you could reach out to your children and write them a letter. Many adolescents may not even know what an actual letter looks like considering they were born in the digital age, so this will give them a real shock! If you can, write one to each of your children acknowledging how well they're doing managing this situation. Every child is different but highlight whatever little things you've noticed in how well they've dealt with this whole situation. I must admit my children have surprised me in many ways in how well they have handled things. Don't misunderstand me, we have our issues, getting them dressed to start with is a daily constant battle that often I don't win but in general they're doing ok. There are things I wish some of my children could adapt to better but I'm not going to bring these up in the letters I write for them- just the positive.

The next task is the dinner conversation. I first did this about ten years ago to encourage my three now older children to

say something nice to each other for a change instead of the constant bickering I witnessed twenty-four hours a day. I grew up an only child so didn't experience this, but apparently sibling squabbles are completely normal. Out of curiosity a couple of nights ago I did it again. The older two remembered and instantly rolled their eyes. Ask each member of your family to say one nice thing about another, if there's a lot of you they can pick one person and then that person will choose someone else. If there are only two or three people in your family ask for three things to be named. It can be anything from "I like it when we play on the computer together" to "You're always really kind to me when I'm upset" It's really lovely and often very funny to see what your children choose to say to you or their siblings.

The kindness across this nation is astounding but for this week, let's give it a little extra push at home. Your children may resist and say its beyond embarrassing but if you start the game off , they will usually respond and it's a lovely reminder that underneath the stress with us all stuck under one roof , it's nice to remind ourselves even just for five minutes that underneath all the bickering and deep sighs we have to take on a regular basis as a parent, that there is love and genuine affection for each other as a family unit



Spotlight on: Families Under Pressure

Today as I write this section (Tuesday 12th May) a new bitesize website has launched called "Families Under Pressure". It contains videos of no more than a minute, voiced by celebrities who are parents themselves, to help look at different issues we are all facing right now. It includes videos on; keeping yourself motivated and positive as a parent, managing conflict and sanctions and is a really great little resource that was put together by Professor Edmund Sonuga-Barke and use tips and hints that are backed up by research to help improve families lives during this time. As previously mentioned, it has just launched today and they will be adding new videos regularly. You can sign up if you wish so you know when new ones become available.

Here is the link below:

<https://familiesunderpressure.maudsleycharity.org/>

I also want to highlight [Guiselley Schools Wellbeing support and services](#) section again. New resources are being updated regularly so it is well worth checking it out as we are discovering great new ones that really do help. I have highlighted several services to the students, but I also think that these are just as useful for parents.

The NSPCC is also an organisation that is recognising that this time is extremely

stressful and have also provided excellent tips and advice for how to manage this situation:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/arguments-conflict-family-tension-coronavirus-lockdown/>

Young Minds also provides a parent's helpline and more information and advice on how to deal with many different situations and conflict parents are having to deal with at the moment:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/tips-for-parents-in-a-difficult-living-situation-during-lockdown/>

Also, specific advice for single parents is available on the Gingerbread section below:

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/coronavirus/>

There is also an organisation called Starline which looks at helping parents with all aspects of home learning and health and wellbeing issues for both parent and child:

<https://www.starline.org.uk/>

When we return from half term, I will be looking at certain issues in more detail. Many of you won't need all the resources I give out but it's important for those who may need it.

I wish you all a relaxing half term!

