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SESSION 5 - Keep calm

SESSION 6 - Review of More Secure Kids

CONTACT DETAILS

MY GOALS

DATE BOOKED

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*More Secure Kids is the result of the commitment,
determination and courage of parents and professionals.
It is based on the ambition to make a difference for kids.
Thank you for having the courage and energy to struggle on
every day.*

WELCOME TO MORE SECURE KIDS

Being a parent is an important and challenging job. Some days or periods in life are more difficult than others. At these times, it can feel hard to be a parent. Support and help from More Secure Kids can make a big difference to the family.

You are not alone

Parents know their children best. But it is still sometimes hard to avoid conflicts at home. When they happen, parents often feel unsure or inadequate. More Secure Kids is a course that will help you prevent conflicts, manage difficult situations in a calmer way and have more positive one-on-one time with your child.

How is everyday life for you?

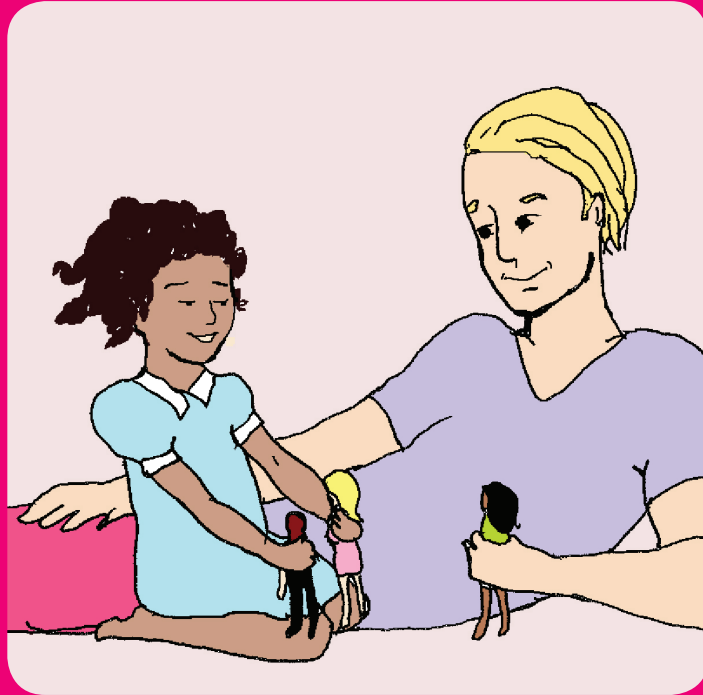
The contents of More Secure Kids are focused on everyday situations that most parents find difficult. What do you do when you get angry at your child? What do you do when your child gets distressed and defiant? How can you improve the odds that your child will listen to you? How can you have more positive one-on-one time together, even though life is sometimes stressful and uncertain?

More Secure Kids is based on parents' own examples to provide concrete advice on handling anger, stress, arguments and difficult situations.



SESSION 1

One-on-one time

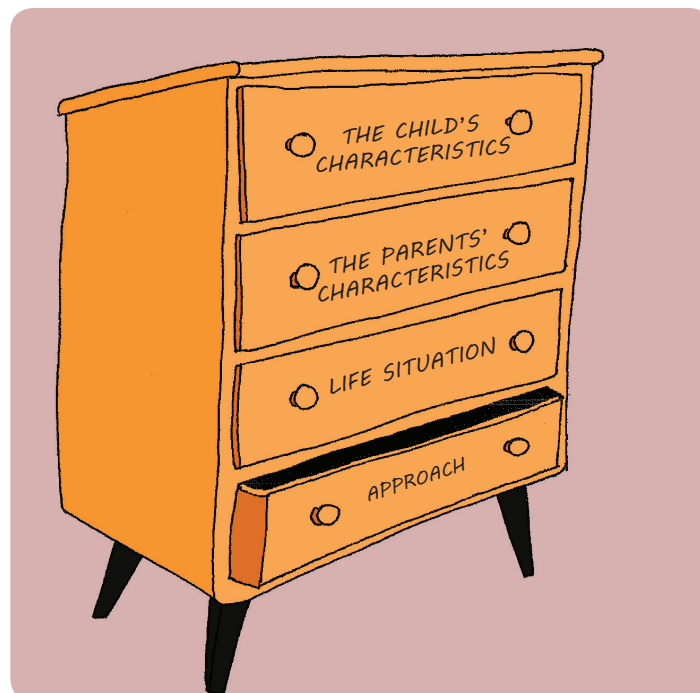


The Cause Matrix

There are many different explanations as to why conflicts arise between parents and children. In **More Secure Kids**, we use a matrix of four different kinds of causes that can lead to conflicts: the child's characteristics, the parents' characteristics, the family's situation and how the parents approach the child.

Approach is the easiest of these to change

You can change your approach faster than you can change characteristics. So, approach will be our primary focus during the course. It is you - the parent - who will be doing the major work between the sessions to change your approach to your child. Some of the work will also deal with your life situation - how you can reduce everyday stress and get a better balance in life, for example.



5-1



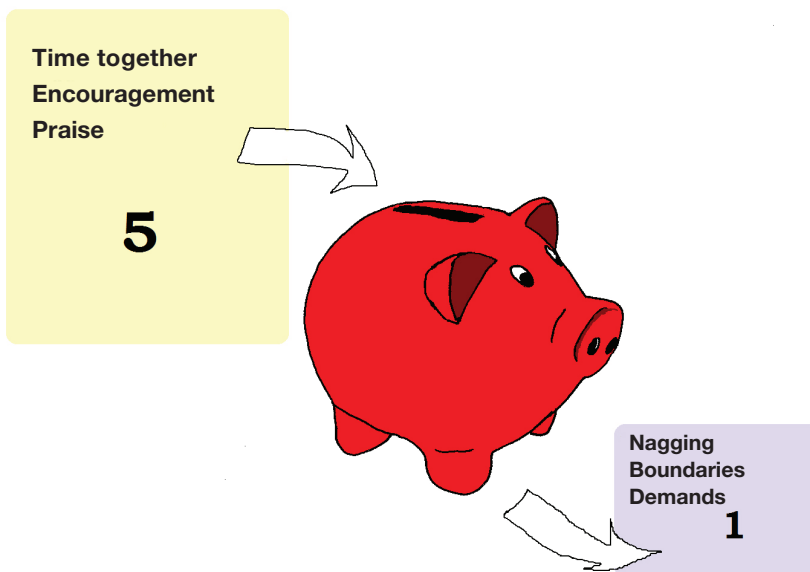
A lot of nagging damages the relationship



A lot of praise strengthens the relationship

Adding to your trust account

The more we invest in relationships, the stronger they get. An investment might be peaceful moments or fun time together, laughter and positive attention. You could call this a “deposit” into a “trust account”. Putting demands on your child is like making a withdrawal from the account. To do that, you have to have something in the account to draw from. Otherwise, there is risk that nagging and arguments will escalate. Five times more positive attention than demands and reprimands is a good balance. In this case, the odds are very good that your child will cooperate.



We call brief interactions that focus on the child “one-on-one time”. One-on-one time is the foundation of **More Secure Kids** because it has been proven to have many positive effects on the parent/child relationship. Regular, positive interaction also reduces the risk that problems will develop in future.

Vaccine against conflicts

The effects of one-on-one time are often immediate. It is harder for both children and parents to get angry at each other after spending time together one-on-one. It also usually becomes easier to cooperate.

Brief moments make a big difference

We often spend much of the day with our children. But there should be a difference between ordinary time together and one-on-one time. Those one-on-one times are more intense because we must be totally present as parents. But they do not have to be long. Fifteen minutes a day can make a big difference in the relationship.



Ways to make one-on-one time special

Just be together. Let go of everything else on your “to-do” list for a little while and just be with your child, right here and right now.

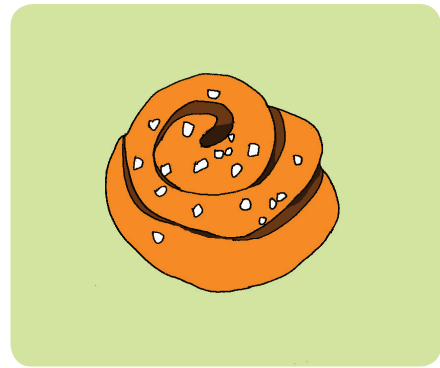
Openly show love and appreciation. Let your child enjoy your undivided attention. Show that you think it’s fun to be with your child. Avoid criticising and asking a lot of questions. That makes the time more unconditional.

Let your child choose and control the activity. The activity should be something your child enjoys, but it can be very simple. Try staying quiet and just watching at first. When the child takes the initiative in the game, you can go along.

Listen and repeat. Repeating what your child says is a way of showing that you are listening and are involved in his or her play. A lot of children also love it when their parent plays “sports commentator” by describing what the child is doing.

You and your child, no-one else. This is a time when your child has an opportunity to feel loved and appreciated by you and only you. If you must spend time with more than one child, focus on only one child at a time.

In Swedish, BULLE is used as a mnemonic.



HOMEWORK



One-on-one time

Plan what you can do together.
Write down the date, time and duration.

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5-1

Focus on what you see as the positive things about your child. Give your child five times as much encouragement and praise as reprimands.

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Five coins

An exercise to show how much you are depositing in the trust account. Pick a time during the week to try this assignment. Put five coins in one of your pockets. Move one coin to another pocket every time you give your child positive attention. You cannot give a reprimand or put a demand on your child until you have moved all of the coins to the other pocket.

Date for the exercise

SESSION 2

The Attention Principle and STOPP

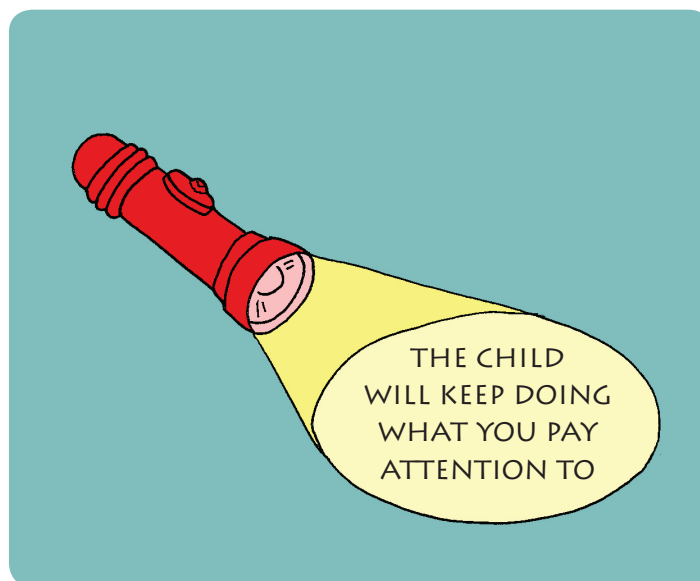


THE ATTENTION PRINCIPLE

We all need warmth, food and sleep to survive. To get this when we are tiny children, we need attention from our parents more than anything. If our parents do not pay attention, there is risk we will starve or freeze to death. That is why attention has been important to our survival throughout history.

Your child will do more of what you pay attention to

Children quickly learn what they have to do to get their parents' attention. In somewhat simplified terms, you could say that the child will keep doing everything he or she gets attention for doing. If the child does not get enough positive attention, he or she may feel that negative attention is better than none at all. We can call this "The Attention Principle".



Shine a torch on what works!

Pay attention to behaviour you want to see more of

Children make an effort to get attention from others, especially their parents. If your child whinges and argues and is reprimanded for doing so, that is a kind of attention too. In these cases, this often escalates into even more argument. One way to avoid "vicious circles" is to use the Attention Principle instead. That means shining the "torch" on what works. Pay attention to behaviour you want to see more of, but try to reduce your attention to what you want to see less of.

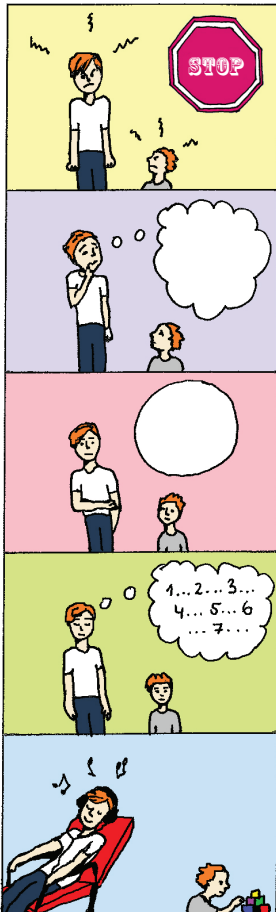
FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS

Sometimes we have to correct our children, but to keep the right balance (5-1), we need to practise what works and find steps along the way. If you want your child to get dressed, you can pay attention when they put their socks on, for example. Of if you want your child to keep their room tidy, you can pay attention when they tidy up their legos or put a book back on the shelf.

Instead of shouting or nagging when your child ...	You can praise your child when ...
has forgotten their homework	they remembered their books
fights with a sibling
leaves toys lying about
throws their jacket on the floor
Own examples:	
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STOP(P)

In Swedish, "STOPP" is used as a mnemonic to help you remember to keep calm. The faster you use STOP(P), the easier it is to stay calm. This can be necessary in situations where the child often receives a lot of negative attention.



Stop in time. It's easier to stay calm in an early phase.

Think about the consequences of acting out the feeling. What do you gain by staying calm?

OK your thoughts and feelings. When you are angry, negative thoughts and feelings come by themselves. That's okay.

Pause. Walk away if you can. What works for you?

Positive attention. Reward yourself for successfully avoiding nagging and shouting!

Why STOP(P)?

The relationship does not have to be damaged.
 The child is given less attention for negative behaviours. Eventually, this may lead to the behaviours ending or becoming less frequent.
 As a parent, you are teaching how strong feelings can be handled in a constructive way.
 The more calmly you act as a parent, the calmer you will become over time.

HOMework



One-on-one time

Plan what you can do together.
Write down the date, time and duration.

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The Attention Principle

Give extra attention to your child for things you think are good and are proud of. But also little things your child does that are a step in the right direction:

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STOP(P)

How and when should I use STOP(P)?

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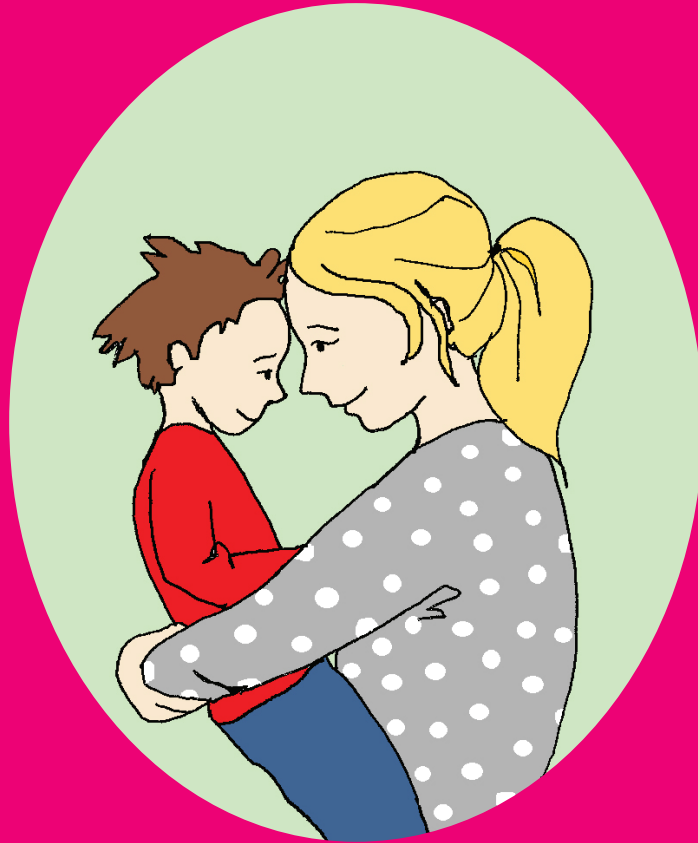
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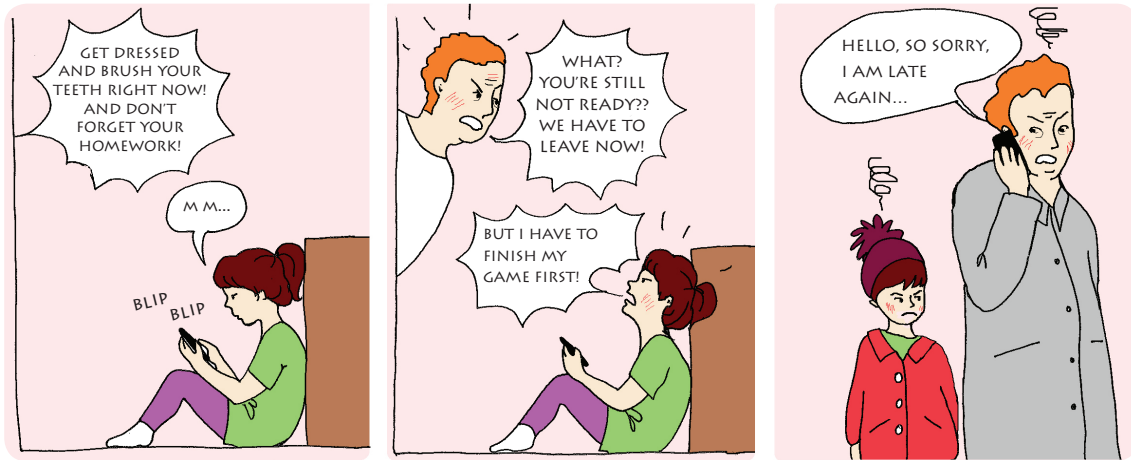
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SESSION 3

Preventing conflicts



STRESSFUL MORNING



THE BEFORE AND AFTER MODEL

The BEFORE and AFTER model is all about preventing conflicts.

Before

What can you do *before*?

What the child is supposed to do



After

What can you do *after*?

Pick a situation to work with

In what situation do you have to instruct your child several times?

Before
What can you do *before*?

What the child is supposed to do

- Pack their school bag
- Come to the dinner table
- Pick up their room
- Get dressed
- Turn off the computer
- Text you when they get home
- Do homework
- Bring schoolbooks home
- Turn off the TV
- Hang up their jacket
- Put dirty clothes in the basket
- Put things away in the fridge

Own examples:

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After
What can you do *after*?

FIVE QUESTIONS BEFORE

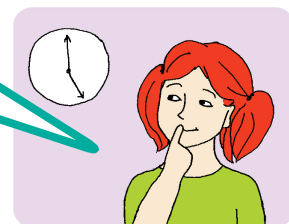


Can you build away the problem?

- For instance, put locks on doors, hide sweets, play computer games after homework is done?
- Pick the right time (for example, not right in the middle of the child's favourite TV programme).
- When mood dips, a piece of fruit BEFORE can make a big difference to both kids and grown-ups.

Do you prepare the child a little beforehand?

- Give the child time to finish up (5-10 minutes before).
- Make eye contact.
- Set a clear end point: *"Once the Pippi game is over, it's time to pack your school bag"*.
- Remind the child once or twice, depending on their age.

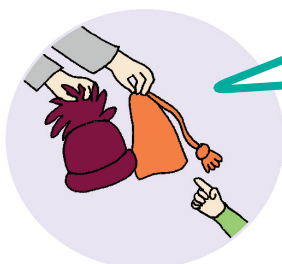
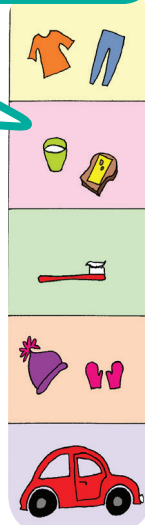


Are you giving clear instructions?

- Make eye contact.
- Give one instruction at a time.
- Say what the child is supposed to do: *"It's time to put on your jacket now"*. This is clearer than asking a question. Avoid pleading!

Can you do the same thing every day?

- Routines make it easier for your child to know what is going to happen.



Is the child given personal responsibility?

- Involve the child in the activity! For instance, can they choose their own clothes? Or help lay the table? Can the child be given small jobs when you shop for food?

FIVE QUESTIONS AFTER

1 What kind of praise does your child like?

All children like different things. What does your child like?

2 Can you praise the child for what they do instead of what they are?

There are a lot of advantages to describing what the child does instead of what they are. For example: *“You put all the lego bricks back in the box!”*, *“It was so great that you told me you needed help!”*, *“Going off on your own for a bit when you got angry was really good!”*, *“You gave the train back to your little sister!”*. This way, the praise is easier to understand and more fun for the child. They will be able to manage more and, most important of all, their faith in their own ability will be strengthened.

Parents who focus on what the child does instead of the child’s characteristics also help their child manage setbacks better, in school for example. When there are setbacks, it helps more to think *“I have to practise more”* instead of *“I’m not smart enough”*.

3 Is your praise immediate, frequent and varied?

Praise within five seconds after the child has done the right thing is a good rule of thumb. Show your appreciation in various ways (with words, hugs, kisses, smiles, thumbs up, putting your arm around the child, caressing the hair). Praise every time when the child is learning something new. Afterwards, you can give praise now and then.

4 Can you avoid mixing in criticism?

It is easy to miss praise or not understand that praise has been given if it is mixed with criticism.

5 Are you sincere?

When you praise something you really like, the child will notice that you really mean what you say.



The FIVE second rule



Encouraging immediately makes it easy for the child to understand the praise... When her child hangs up his jacket...

...superhero Mum flies in within a couple of seconds...



...to show the child how happy she is.



HOMEWORK



One-on-one time

Plan what you can do together.

Write down the date, time and duration.

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Before

This is how I will prepare:

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My plan for making it happen:

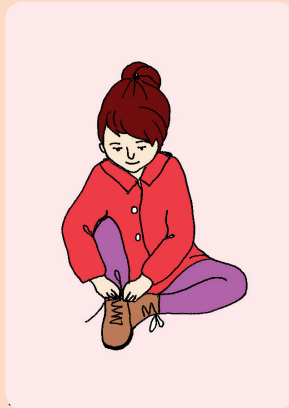
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What the child is supposed to do



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After

This is how I will show my appreciation:

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My plan for making it happen:

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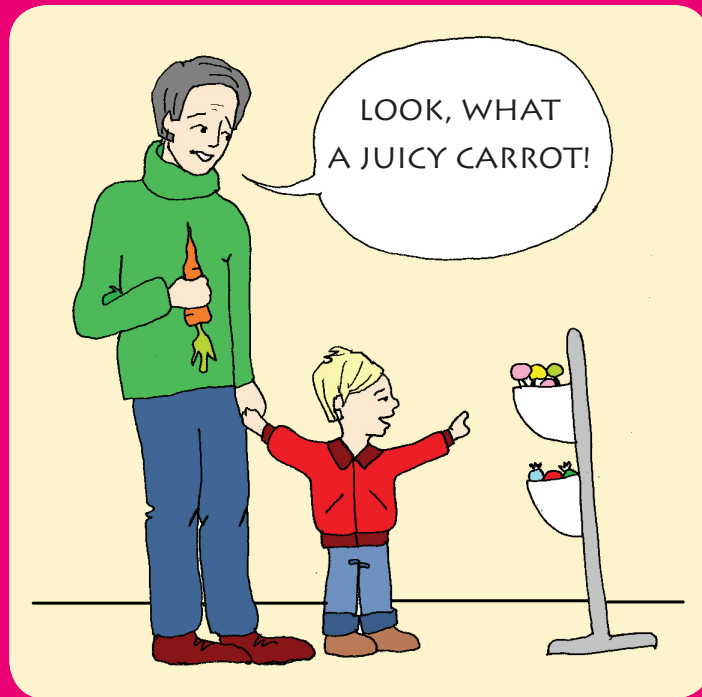
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SESSION 4

Session 4 - Refusing conflicts



NAGGING AND SHOUTING

A lot of nagging leads to more conflicts

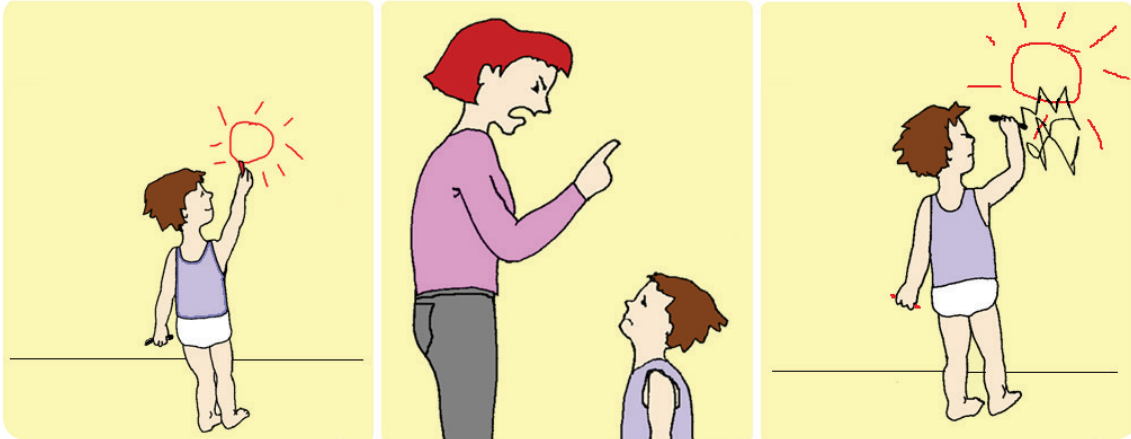
Nagging leads to more conflicts. But you can practise the Attention Principle to reduce the nagging and improve cooperation between the parent and the child.

The short-term trap

All parents nag their children sometimes. One reason for that is that it might work - at least short term. The child often stops the behaviour, but as soon as the parent turns their back, they do it again. The parent falls into the “short-term trap” and has to constantly put out fires instead of building up positive interaction.

Afraid or sad instead of learning something

Nagging and shouting damage the relationship. If the parent loses their temper, the child is likely to get sad or afraid of the parent instead of learning something from the reprimand.



Shouting often works immediately, but there are a lot of negative side effects. Although some battles have to be fought, it can be done in a calmer way. If you shine the torch more often on what works, the problems often become less over time.

INSTEAD OF NAGGING AND SHOUTING

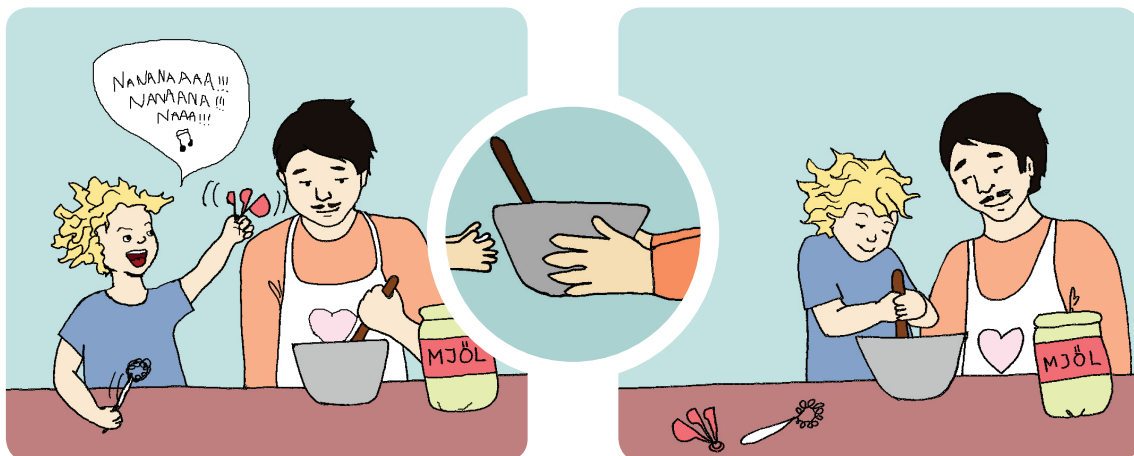
Less nagging cuts argument in half

Studies show that parents who manage to stop nagging can reduce the number of arguments by half. If the child does something inappropriate or annoying, it is hard not to reprimand them. It's almost like a reflex, even if the child is not doing something dangerous. Another approach is to put up with what the child is doing instead of shouting.

“STOP(P)” and distract instead of nagging and shouting.

Start by practising on something minor the child often does for which you usually reprimand them. Try “STOP(P)” (see Session 2) and distract the child instead of “correcting” them. “STOP(P)” and distract are two tricks for helping you wait out the child and shine the torch on what works.

- 1 Use “STOP(P)” on yourself. If you can keep calm, you can stay in the situation. If not, it is best if you walk away for a while if you can.
- 2 Distract as soon as you can and encourage the child. “Would you like to stir the bowl a little? Super, now we’ll have a nice, smooth batter.”



Just keep on doing what you are doing or walk away calmly. You can also talk to somebody else. That makes it easier to keep from nagging and shouting.

Remember the Attention Principle! Distract or find something else to pay attention to as soon as the child stops.

Confirm the child's feelings



Trying to “correct the feelings” can make your child feel even more distressed and angry.

It is difficult to persuade the child to feel differently in the heat of the moment. It is hard for an upset child to think clearly. You might say that the child is thinking with their “feelings” instead of their head.

Examples of attempts to explain or persuade:

“It doesn’t matter that the toy broke.”

“Oh, that’s nothing to cry about, everything went fine yesterday.”



Putting feelings into words is soothing.

It is easier for children to understand and solve problems when they are calm. One way to help your child deal with strong feelings is to put what they are feeling into words. You can help your child calm down in the moment. Over time, this will also help the child recognise their feelings and be able to withstand them.

Confirming the child's feelings - step by step

- 1 Use your body language to show you are calm.** Use a calm voice. When you do, there is a chance your child will be able to take in what you are saying.
- 2 Put the feelings into words:** Try to figure out what your child is feeling and put it into words! But remember to keep it brief. *"You got really sad when the tower fell down, I can understand that!"* *"You weren't happy with the drawing. It didn't turn out the way you wanted."* *"You really wanted Granny to visit today. You miss her so much."*

Remember STOP(P) if you feel like you can't keep calm. When the problem is more serious or recurring, pick a suitable time to sit down in peace and quiet to find solutions. *"How should we fix this so that both you and your sister get the same amount of computer time?"*



Be clear and consistent

Saying no: keep it short and calm

Sometimes parents have to say no. That can be hard and often leads to long explanations. But instead of soothing the child, explanations can escalate things so that the child whinges/argues/cries even more. When that happens, we often want to give in.

Say “yes” at once or stick to your “no”

Giving in to argument can make your child argue even more the next time. That is why it is better to say yes right away if you don't have the energy to take on a conflict just then.

But if the child cannot have their way, it is better to stay no and stick to it. You can explain why at the same time. For many children, it calms them down to put their feelings into words. It is a way of showing the child that the parent has listened and understood.

When you have to say no to your child...

Give a short explanation.

“No, today is Wednesday. We have sweets on Saturday.”

Avoid getting into a discussion if your child keeps whinging or provoking you.

Confirm the child's feelings

“I can see you are sad and angry.” “You think things stink right now.”

“You really wanted some sweets.” “I can understand that you were disappointed.”

Distract the child.

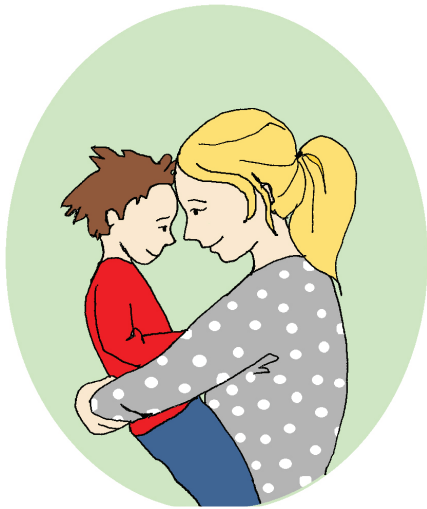
Distract the child at the first opportunity.

“That plant needs water - do you want to water it?”

“Come on, let's go feed the dog.”



HOMEWORK



One-on-one time

Plan what you can do together.

Write down the date, time and duration.

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Instead of nagging and shouting

The goal is to let four out of five conflicts go. I can choose not to nag and shout in these situations:

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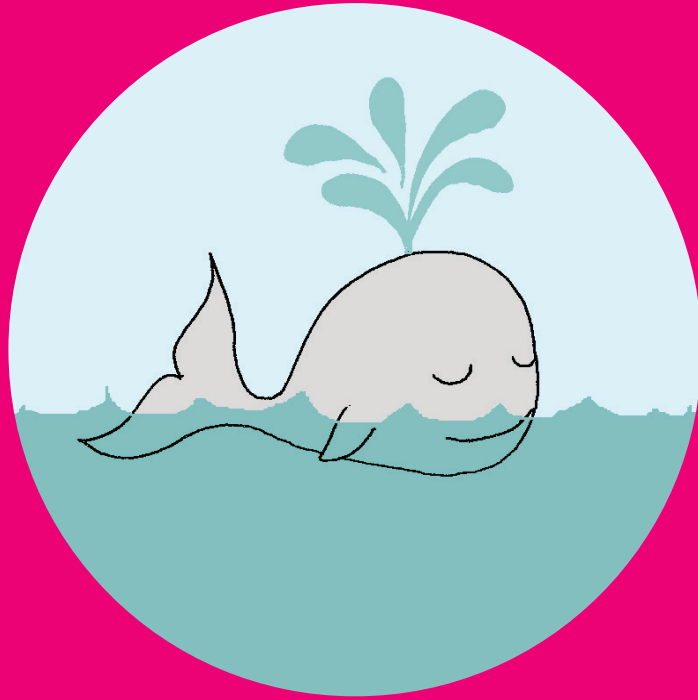
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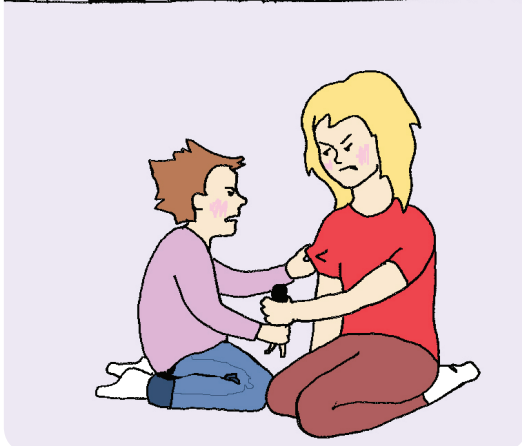
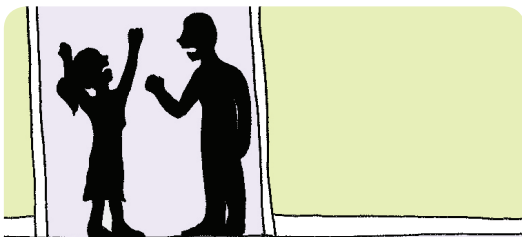
SESSION 5

Keep calm

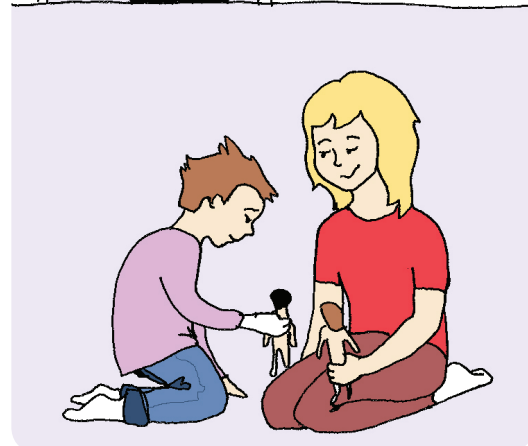
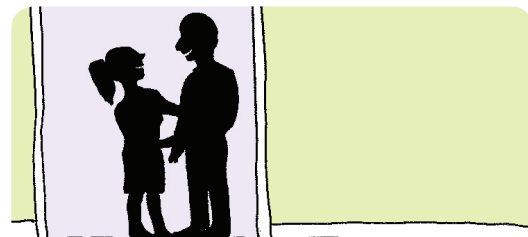


THE IMITATION PRINCIPLE

Children do not always do as you say. But children often do what you do, and what their siblings and friends do. Imitation is the fastest, most effective way to learn.



The child will also imitate how conflicts are resolved in the family. In addition, a lot of nagging and shouting damages the relationship.



Calm conflict management is hard to explain to a child, but easier to show. If the parent acts calmly in difficult situations, the child learns how conflicts can be resolved without shouting and arguments.

WHY DO WE GET ANGRY?

More stress - easier to anger

We all feel angry and annoyed sometimes. It is a natural reaction in situations that make us feel stressed. What makes us angry varies from one person to the next, but also with our mood at the time. We are more stressed and vulnerable on certain days or periods in life. At those times, we are quicker to anger.

What makes us angry?

Some situations are more likely to trigger anger than others: too many people on the train, spilt milk at the breakfast table, a child who refuses to get dressed when the bus is coming in a couple of minutes or a colleague who doesn't wash up their coffee mug.

Anger makes us thicker

When we get angry, we think poorly. It's harder to solve problems, we do things on impulse and negative thoughts come on their own. That is why it is easy to do things you regret later.

Both a feeling and a behaviour

If you want to get better at managing your anger, you need to learn to separate the emotion you feel when you get angry and what you do when you get angry. We can't shut down the feeling - it comes by itself. But we can actually learn to control what we do when we get angry.

Exercise and mini-breaks calm us down.

Regular exercise and taking short breaks are powerful tools against stress. Adding an activity that makes us feel good every day - taking a moment to breathe or taking a walk - makes it easier to keep calm in the midst of a hectic day.



WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN YOU GET ANGRY?

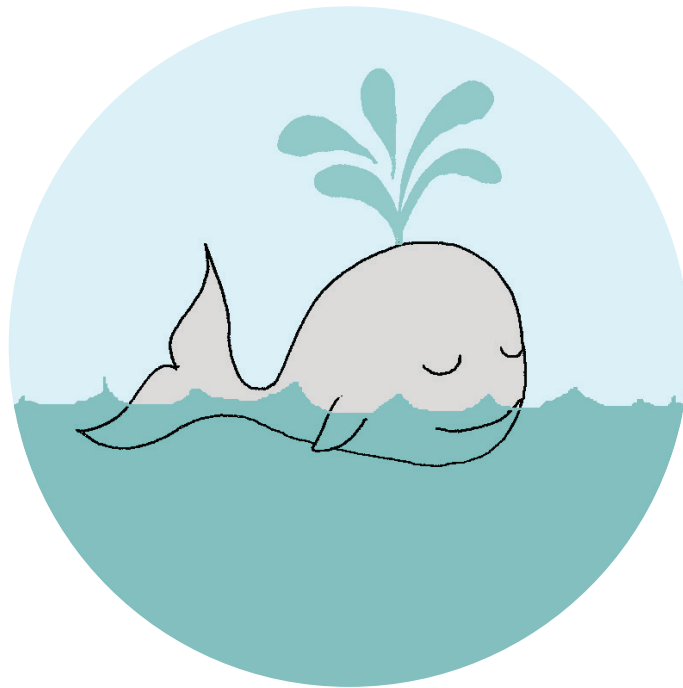
When anger comes, we have a choice - act out the feeling or stay calm, even though we feel anger in our bodies. Behaving calmly is very effective! The angry feeling will go away faster if we breathe calmly, speak softly and do things slowly. The body learns that everything is okay. Over time, this reduces stress and makes it easier to keep calm the next time you get angry.



Think about when it is necessary to use STOP(P).

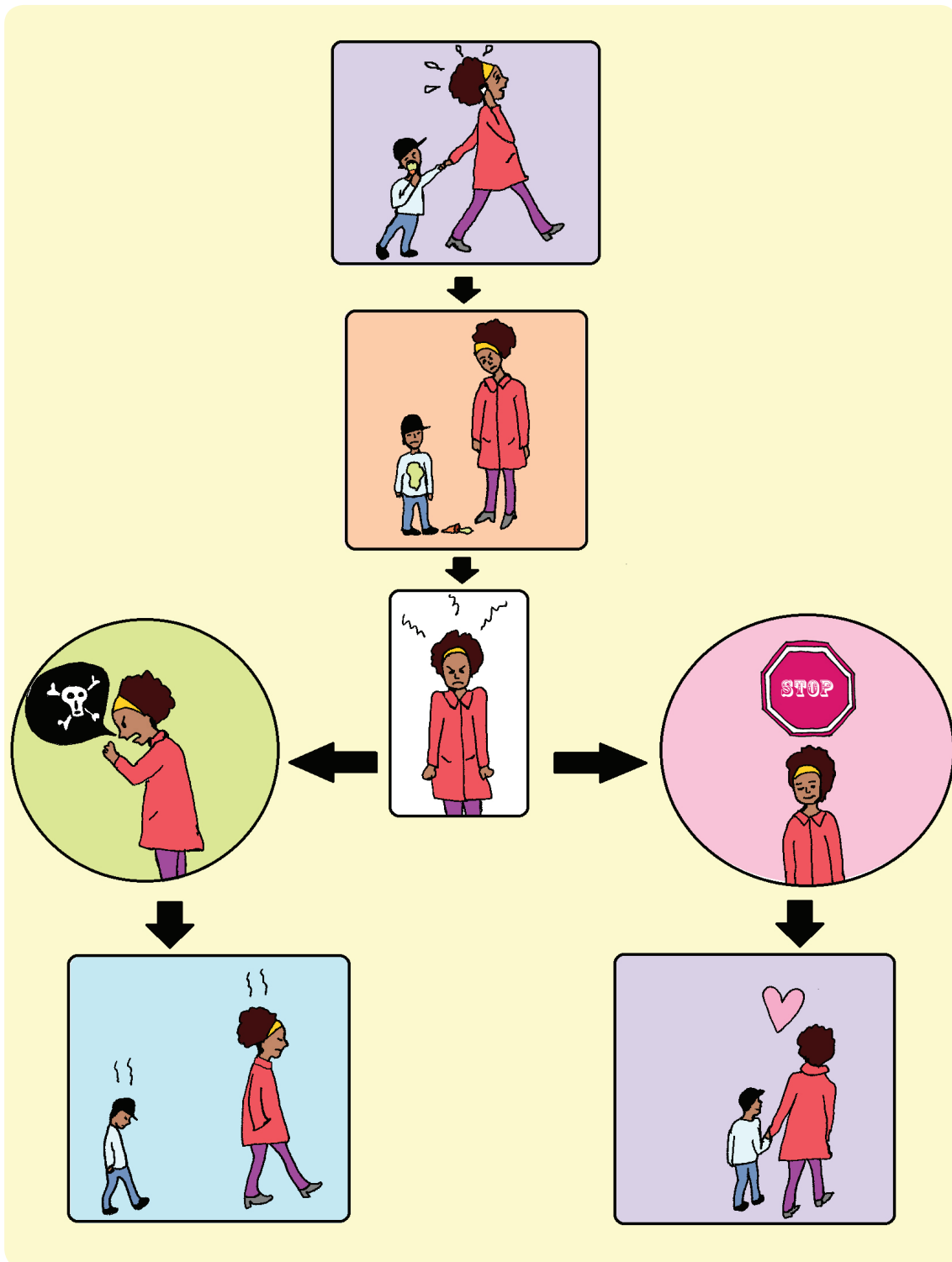
Easier with practise

With a little practise, we can get better at doing what we want to do instead of letting our angry feelings control us.



“The choice is yours”

ANGER - STEP BY STEP



Explore the anger



Find alternatives



LIFE SITUATION/STRESS

What makes you more vulnerable?



How can you reduce your stress in advance?

TRIGGER EVENT

What triggered the anger?



Can you build away the situation?

SIGNS OF ANGER

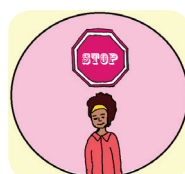
Body, feelings, thoughts?



How can you learn to identify anger faster?

BEHAVIOUR

What did you do?



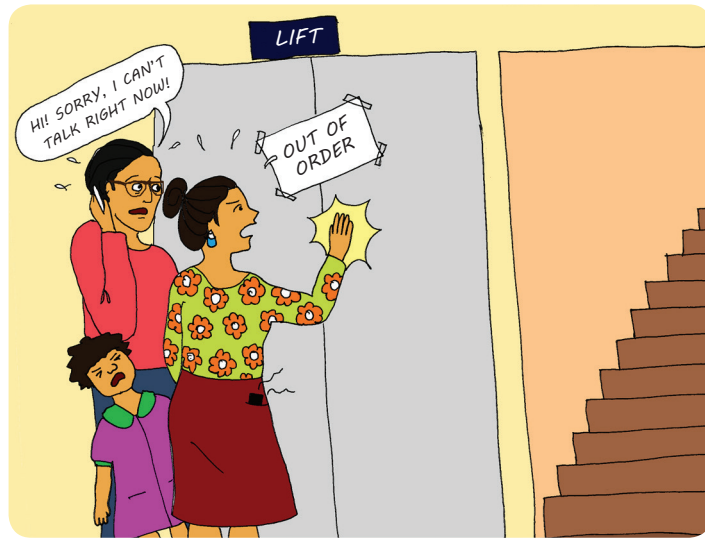
What could you do instead?

CONSEQUENCES

...of doing angry things?



...of doing calm things?

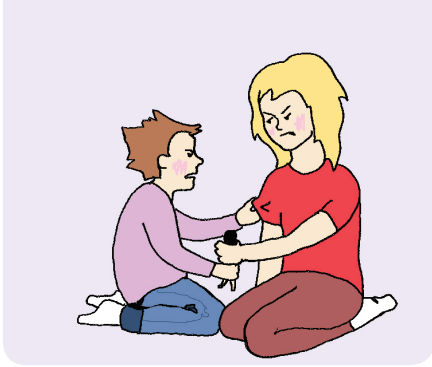
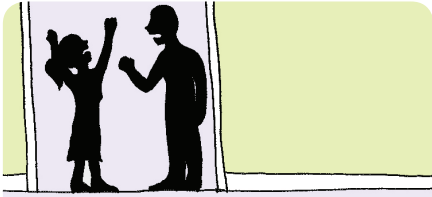


The family does not see the stairs. To put it simply, it is harder to solve problems when we are stressed out. But it is easier to get angry!



Doing the things we have to do to make everyday life work and doing things that make us feel good will help us keep a good balance in life. Do you need to add or take away something from your day to be less stressed?

HOMEWORK



I have a hard time keeping calm in these situations:

1.

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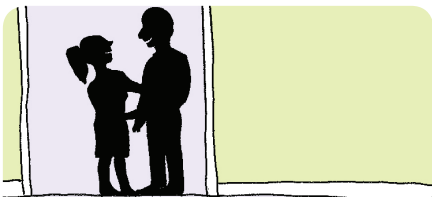
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2.

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I am going to try this to make it easier to keep calm in risky situations:

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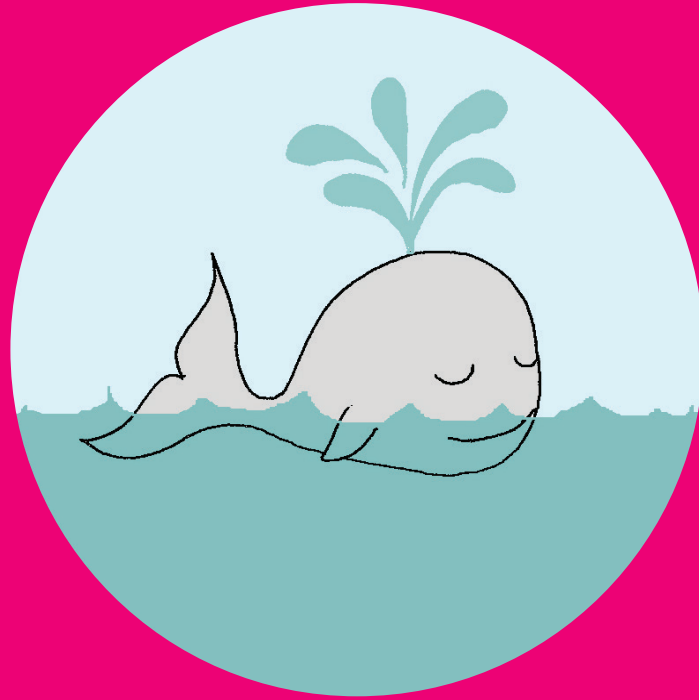
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SESSION 6

Session 6 – Review of More Secure Kids



REVIEW OF MORE SECURE KIDS

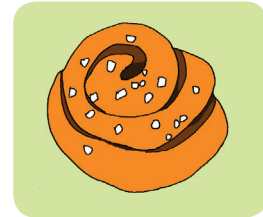
5-1

Five times as much positive attention as demands and reprimands is a good balance.



One-on-one time

One-on-one time in **More Secure Kids** follows the hints: (just be, openly show love and appreciation, let the child choose and control the activity, listen and repeat, you and your child only). Brief one-on-one time every day leads to good relationships and fewer conflicts between children and parents. In Swedish, BULLE is used as a mnemonic.



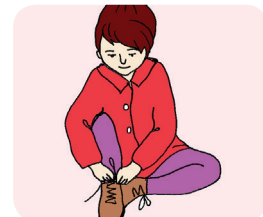
The Attention Principle

Choose not to nag and shout simply by not “shining the torch” on little things you used to pay attention to. Choose instead to pay attention to the child’s attempts to do good things.



The BEFORE and AFTER model

Having routines, letting the child know a little BEFORE they are supposed to do something and quick, positive attention immediately AFTER the child makes an effort will make it easier for the child to succeed.



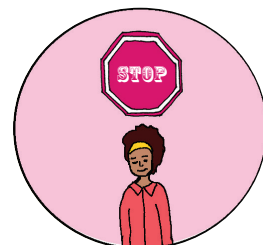
Calm conflict management and the Imitation Principle

Calm conflict management is an alternative to nagging and shouting. When you stay calm in difficult situations, your child will also be calmer - at the moment and in the future. Children learn not to threaten, shriek or use violence to get their way.

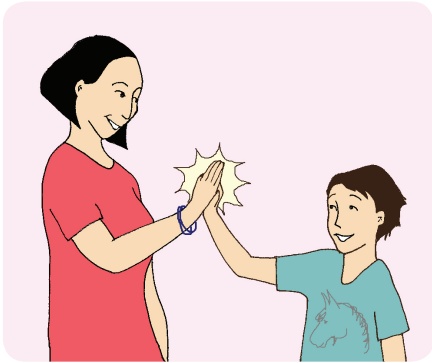


Keep calm

Behaving calmly makes you calmer. It is also important to prevent anger by reducing your stress and stopping anger in its tracks as soon as possible.



PLANNING AHEAD



This is what I want to keep doing:

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My plan when there are setbacks:

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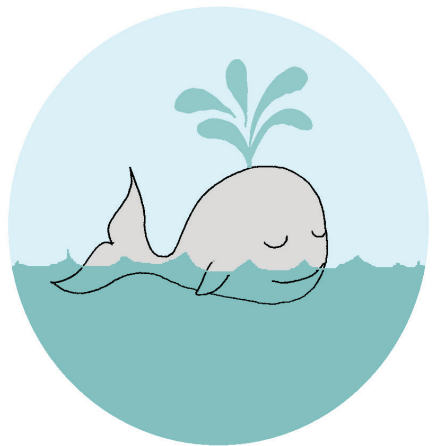
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Date for follow-up:

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