The Human Safety Net

Parenting in times of stress

Talking about difficult topics

It's so important to be open and honest with your children, especially when it comes to difficult topics. We take a look at how to answer their questions and support their understanding of the world around them.

Be open and listen

Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions and find out how much they already know

Be honest

Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how much your child can understand and how best to explain something to them depending on their age.

Be supportive

Your child might be feeling scared or confused. Give them space to share how they are feeling and let them know you are there for them.

If you don't know, say so

If you don't know the answer to your child's question, it's okay to say phrases such as:

- 'We think xxx, but we aren't sure'
- 'We don't know, but we are working on it'
- 'We hope to find that out soon'

Use this as an opportunity to find out more together, you might both discover some new information!

Seek reliable sources of information

Be aware that what you read on the internet isn't always correct. Visit trustworthy sites to make sure that the information you share with your children is up-to-date and accurate.

Teach compassion

Discussing a difficult topic provides an opportunity to encourage empathy and understanding in your children. You can do this by asking how the topic might make people feel and seeing what ideas they come up with to support others.

End on a positive note

Having talked about a difficult topic with your child, check that they are okay. Remind them that you care and let them know they can talk to you about anything at any time.

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