

pip o. Gazette

A new magazine about social-emotional development

01 • 2024

EMPATHY FOR THE SELF



YOU ARE YOUR BEST THING, AND YOU ARE ENOUGH.

– Maya Angelou

The Laboratory for Social-Emotional Development and Intervention (SEDI Lab) is part of the Centre for Child Development, Mental Health, and Policy. For the latest on our research, events, job postings, and resources, sign up for our **e-newsletter** by scanning the QR code.



Editorial

Self-care, self-compassion, self-love. We are hearing these terms more often, but what do they mean? Much of this is connected to empathy for the self, a core concept that is part of *The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development*®, a training for caregivers and educators that our lab has developed based on our more than 20 years of child development research. Research assistant **Zainab Haseeb** has been part of this research team working on curriculum materials and shares how we can support the development of the superpower of self-empathy in children. **Joy Chang** is a project coordinator and part of our training team and in this issue she shares practical tips and strategies for caregivers and educators, including an adaptation of our L.O.V.E. strategy. Our knowledge translation assistant **Maya Awad** shares her experience as a student volunteer in our child development research lab and its impact on her personal and professional journey. She also spoke to a couple of teenagers regarding their thoughts about self-care, positive self-talk, and personal strengths.

Peter Wong, a teacher, future psychotherapist, and father of three writes about how he handles his “inner critic” as a stay-at-home parent. You will also read about how Registered Early Childhood Educator **Deinma Iruenabere** finds and creates her own “pockets of peace” during a busy day in the classroom.

There are more fun things inside this issue, including a cheat sheet put together on the differences between healthy guilt (which is needed for healthy development) versus shame (which is not), beautiful children’s artwork and reflections on what they like about themselves, as well as book recommendations for children, teens, and adults to help cultivate empathy for the most important people in your life—including you!

Tina Malti
Editor-in-Chief

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WHAT IS pip o.?

A **pip** is a seed found in the core of a fruit. It represents beginnings and growth.

◐ stands for *Omega*, the final letter in the Greek alphabet. It signifies infinity, endlessness, and enlightenment.

Every child has the seed of infinite potential! We hope to help encourage the development of kindness for themselves and others, well-being, and personal growth by preparing a supportive environment and nurturing care as a community.

pip o. is an arts-based knowledge translation project by the SEDI Lab. Through this initiative, we bring like-minded people together to explore and nurture the infinite potentialities in every child. Our goals include sharing research-informed practices and strategies to promote growth, kindness, and well-being for children and adolescents and creating resources to support parents, caregivers, and educators in their commitment to healthy child development and caring.

pip o. Project

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HOW IT STARTED...

The **Laboratory for Social-Emotional Development and Intervention (SEDI Lab)** is a community of researchers and partners at the University of Toronto who explore how we can provide nurturing care to children for healthy development through research, practice, and policy. Our founding director is Dr. Tina Malti, a clinical child psychologist and psychology professor at the University of Toronto.

Particularly, we focus on understanding and promoting kindness with the self and others, because growing internal strengths such as kindness helps children realize their full potential and develop and maintain well-being, treat others equitably, and encourages them to feel empowered in society.

While we *study* emotions, art is a way to *express* them. This arts-based research to practice project was born out of our love for collaboration: working side-by-side with artists, educators, families, and local organizations to support our children.

HEALTHY GUILT VS SHAME

By Sian Day

Although guilt and shame share similar characteristics, they are distinct emotions. We explore the differences between each emotion to ensure that caregivers have a better understanding of how to foster healthy guilt in children and avoid instilling shame.

Guilt and shame are emotions that begin to develop early in life and continue “to develop over time as children form a more stable sense of self” (Parisette-Sparks et al., 2017; Malti, 2020). Children may have their first basic experience with guilt and shame around 2–3 years old (Bafunno & Camodecca, 2013). Guilt and shame are often used interchangeably, and although they are both in the same self-conscious moral emotion family, they are two distinct emotions (Malti, 2016; Eisenberg, 2000). It is crucial that those who care for children understand the differences between these emotions.

Guilt is about behaviour and doing something wrong. It can be healthy or unhealthy. When a child experiences healthy guilt, they feel remorse and regret, but this “does not affect their core identity” (Eisenberg, 2000). They may also be encouraged to try and make amends (Eligh, 2017). In other words, they are not their behaviour, and behaviour can change and improve over time, with healthy guilt helping to clear the pathway forward.

On the other hand, **shame is about self-worth and the feeling of being something wrong. It is always unhealthy.** When a child experiences shame, they feel bad about who they are internally (Copeland, 2018). They may think that they are “bad,” so they may be less motivated to try to make amends after doing something wrong. To further distinguish healthy guilt from shame, the illustration on the next page highlights their differences and provides strategies for how caregivers can foster healthy guilt in children, rather than inadvertently instill shame.



INNER MAP OF HEALTHY GUILT & SHAME



Healthy Guilt

- 1 What can healthy guilt look like?
A child takes their friend's toy without asking. They may think, "I took my friend's toy and now he is sad. I should say sorry and give it back."
- 2 What can it sound like?
"I made a bad choice."
- 3 What type of behaviour can I look out for?
 - Trying to fix or repair the consequences of their bad choice (e.g., wanting to give the toy back)
 - Confessing to caregivers about their poor choice
 - Wanting to apologize to the victim for their wrongdoing
- 4 What is it?
When a child feels sadness and regret after doing something wrong and understands that they have hurt someone (Malti, 2020).

(Bafunno & Camodecca, 2013; Drummond et al., 2017; Horrell, 2022)

Shame

- 1 What can shame look like?
A child takes their friend's toy without asking. They may think, "I am a bad friend because I stole my friend's toy."
- 2 What can it sound like?
"I did something bad. That means I am bad"
- 3 What type of behaviour can I look out for?
 - Averting their eyes (e.g., gaze avoidance)
 - Slumping their head
 - Aggression and outbursts of anger
 - Acting reserved or distant
 - Bodily avoidance (e.g., moving away, backing up, and withdrawing)
- 4 What is it?
When a child links their negative behaviour to their self-worth and identity.

(Bafunno & Camodecca, 2013; Drummond et al., 2017, Malti, 2020; Horrell, 2022)

What Can I Do?

- 1 What can I do?
When children do something wrong, it is our role as caregivers to ensure that we do not cause them to feel shame, but instead encourage healthy guilt to foster future prosocial behaviour (Rote & Smetana, 2017). This can be done by calmly and kindly helping the child understand the clear link between their actions and the emotional consequences (Eisenberg, 2000; Malti, 2016).

Using the same example of a child taking their friend's toy, you may say, "Your friend is crying. They feel sad because you took their toy without asking them." It is important to focus on the child's actions, not their character as that can cause feelings of shame in the child and affect their sense of self (Rote & Smetana, 2017).

From there, you can talk with your child about what a good solution or outcome could be to make up for their poor choice.

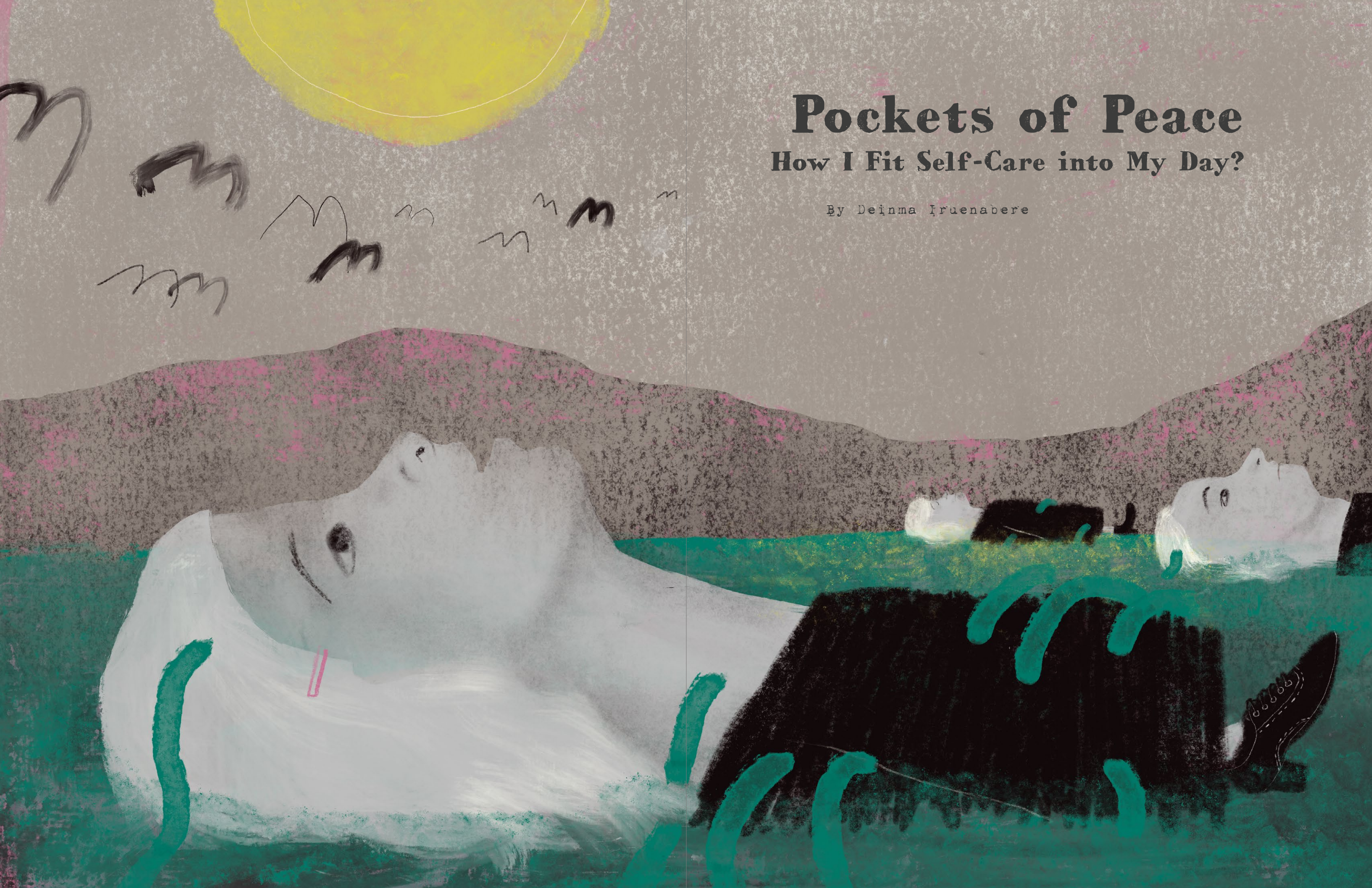
In contrast, when children do something good or kind, caregivers should promote self-kindness by verbally praising and acknowledging their child's behaviour (catch them doing something good!), as this can lead to increased self-esteem and better decision-making (Spinrad & Gal, 2018).

Ultimately, it is imperative that as caregivers, **we teach children that if they make a mistake, that does not mean they are a mistake.** Children *will* make poor choices, and it is our job to help them acknowledge, learn, and grow. This will lead to better and kinder behaviour in the future.

Pockets of Peace

How I Fit Self-Care into My Day?

By Deinma Iruenabere



EDUCATORS ARE USUALLY DEEPLY PASSIONATE ABOUT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR OVERALL WELL-BEING. SADLY, IF THEY ARE NOT GIVEN TIME FOR SELF-CARE TO GET RECHARGED, BURNOUT HAPPENS. FIND OUT HOW LITTLE CHANGES TO ONE EDUCATOR'S ROUTINE KEEPS HER ENERGIZED THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

As an experienced Early Childhood Educator (ECE), I have learned the importance of self-care and nurturing relationships while navigating the demanding world of childcare. The constant routine and demands of the job can easily lead to burnout, but by intentionally squeezing in time for self-care, I have found ways to stay energized and connected with both myself and the children in my care.

GOOD MORNING!

- Each day begins with setting a positive tone during my commute to work by listening to uplifting music (right now I'm loving songs by Maverick City Music!).
- As I prepare the class environment, I envision how the children will interact with materials, and this fuels me with excitement throughout the day.
- I cherish the moments of joy when witnessing their "a-ha" discoveries during playtime, even if it means enduring the occasional mess from sensory activities.
- Being outdoorsy, I relish the time spent with the children outside, supporting them during transitions and finding moments of peace in nature.





PRIORITIZING MY HEALTH

To ensure I stay healthy and maintain a positive mindset, I prioritize my physical and mental well-being. I have learned the hard way that neglecting personal health can lead to burnout. Now, I take care of myself by eating well, staying hydrated, exercising and attending appointments. By addressing personal stressors, such as strong smells that overwhelm me, I use practical solutions like N95 masks and scentless personal care products. Recognizing my limitations and learning to support myself has been crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Throughout the day, I cherish the simple joys of spending quality time with the children. Engaging with them during mealtimes allows me to connect with their innocent perspectives and keeps my inner child alive. Nap time offers a moment of quiet reflection, where I can sit with my thoughts, enjoy deep breathing, recharge and prepare for the next burst of energy as the children wake up.

FINDING PEACE WITHIN UNIQUE PROGRAM NEEDS

Working in a program with high needs requires an open mind and a curious outlook. I take notes and reflect to better understand and support each child's unique needs. Accepting that some things are beyond my control allows me to find peace in knowing that I have done my best. I also maintain a proactive approach

to learning and improving as a professional, seeking to build positive relationships with colleagues and families. This goes a long way in helping to reduce stress, because keeping healthy relationships enhances mental health.

END OF DAY

At the end of the day, I take a moment to express gratitude for the day's experiences and accomplishments. If it was a particularly challenging day, I debrief with a close friend (miles away) who shares my profession. This collective reflection allows us to reconnect with our initial passion for early childhood education and reminds us of the power of laughter and self-care during a demanding workday.

As an Early Childhood Educator, I have come to understand that nurturing relationships, especially with myself, is the key to thriving in this rewarding yet emotionally demanding profession. Through self-care, appreciation for nature, and fostering positive connections, I continue to find fulfillment and joy in my role as a caretaker and educator. By prioritizing well-being and embracing the little pockets of peace and laughter, I can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of the children and families I serve.



COMIC CONTEST: HOW TO ENTER

**What does it mean to be *resilient*?
Show us by creating your own comic!**

Have you ever had a really bad day? But then, you were able to move forward after finding your inner strength or outside support? That's **resilience**!

**BEING RESILIENT MEANS BEING ABLE TO
OVERCOME (OR "BOUNCE BACK")
FROM CHALLENGES.**



The *pip o. Gazette* features a special theme every issue, and our fall/winter 2025 issue will talk about RESILIENCE.

We want to see what resilience means to you!

Create your very own comic strip about someone bouncing back from a setback. We will read every comic received and everyone who submits a comic by the deadline will be entered into a lucky draw to win a prize.* This contest is open to children ages 8–12 years old.

BONUS! ONE COMIC STRIP THAT SHOWS RESILIENCE CLEARLY AND CREATIVELY WILL WIN A SECOND PRIZE* AND BE PUBLISHED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE, HELPING TO EXPLAIN THE IDEA OF RESILIENCE TO OTHER CHILDREN.

HOW TO ENTER:

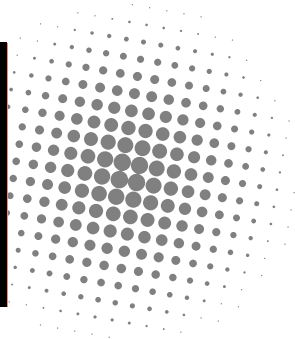
1. Print out the comic template and create your comic. See tips on the next page.
2. Take a photo of your comic (.jpg, .png).
3. Upload your comic to this [online form](#) by **November 17, 2024**.

Questions? Contact us at maltilab.pipo@utoronto.ca.

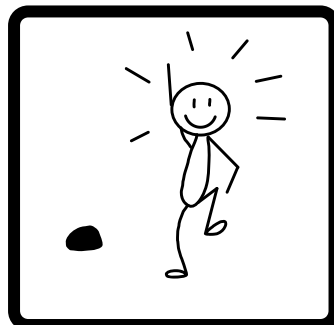
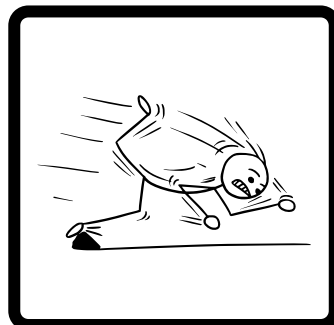
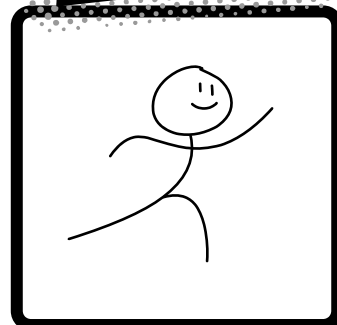
*Only residents of Canada and the U.S.A. are eligible to win a prize. The deadline to enter the contest is November 17, 2024 by 11:59 p.m. EST. Winners will be emailed by early 2025. Please see all contest rules and guidelines at the online form or email maltilab.pipo@utoronto.ca.



COMIC CONTEST: HOW TO ENTER

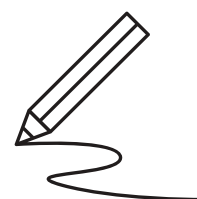


EXAMPLE



TIPS!

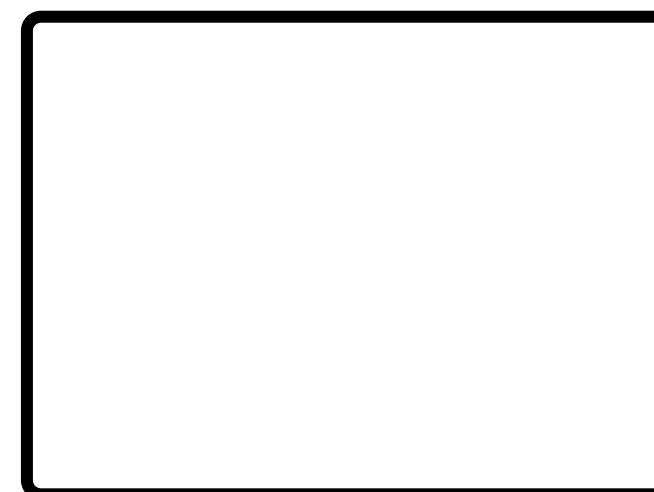
- **Plan ahead.** How does the story start? What is the issue/conflict/challenge? How is it resolved? How is my comic showing what *resilience* means?
- **Use colour** to make your pictures pop, set the mood, and draw attention to certain things you want your reader to see.
- **Outline your pictures** with a black marker or pencil crayon to make them stand out.
- Use **speech bubbles** if needed, but keep it short and sweet (Instead of “Ow, that really hurt!” you can just use “Ouch!”).



*Only residents of Canada and the U.S.A. are eligible to win a prize. The deadline to enter the contest is November 17, 2024 by 11:59 p.m. EST. Winners will be emailed by early 2025. Please see all contest rules and guidelines at the online form or email maltilab.pipo@utoronto.ca.

TITLE: _____

BY: _____





Unleashing the Power Within:
Cultivating Self-Empathy in
Children's Emotional Growth

By Zainab Haseeb

Discover the power of empathy for the self and its impact on children's emotional development. This article explores how empathy evolved during different developmental periods, from building self-awareness in early years to deepening self-reflection and moral understanding in later stages.

What is empathy for the self?

Empathy is often associated with understanding and caring for others, but it is equally important to extend that empathy towards ourselves. Empathy for the self involves treating oneself with the same compassion, understanding, and care that we would offer to a friend in need. It means acknowledging and accepting our own feelings and experiences, and demonstrating self-love and kindness. By practicing empathy for ourselves, we can gain a deeper understanding of our thoughts and actions, leading to personal growth, increased happiness, and enhanced self-confidence.

How empathy for the self develops during different developmental periods

Birth to 2 years: Building a sense of self-awareness

During the first two years of life, toddlers

begin to develop their sense of identity in relation to the world around them. Around 18 months, they can recognize themselves in a mirror, and by the age of two, they can describe themselves physically, such as saying, "I am big " or "I am a boy." This period also witnesses the emergence of early signs of guilt. When a toddler engages in behaviour they know they shouldn't, they may display their guilt through actions like looking away, crying, or getting upset.

To support empathy for the self during this stage, adults can create a nurturing environment that acknowledges and validates the child's emotions by providing reassurance and guidance without harsh criticism. This way, adults can help children understand the consequences of their actions while helping them maintain a positive sense of self-worth.

3 to 5 years: Understanding one's own emotions and the emotions of others

Between the ages of three and five, children become more capable of differentiating their own needs, interests, and abilities from those of others. They can better understand and articulate their own emotions, as well as recognize the emotions of those around them. This increased emotional awareness allows them to experience guilt more profoundly when they perceive that they have done something wrong. For instance, if a



child grabs another child's toy, they may feel a stronger sense of guilt because they can imagine how they would feel if their toy was taken.

During this developmental period, adults can support empathy for the self by praising children's efforts and character when they engage in kind and considerate behaviour. By emphasizing their positive qualities and reinforcing the importance of empathy and kindness, adults foster a positive self-identity and encourage children to consider the impact of their actions on others.

6 to 8 years: Deepening self-reflection and moral understanding

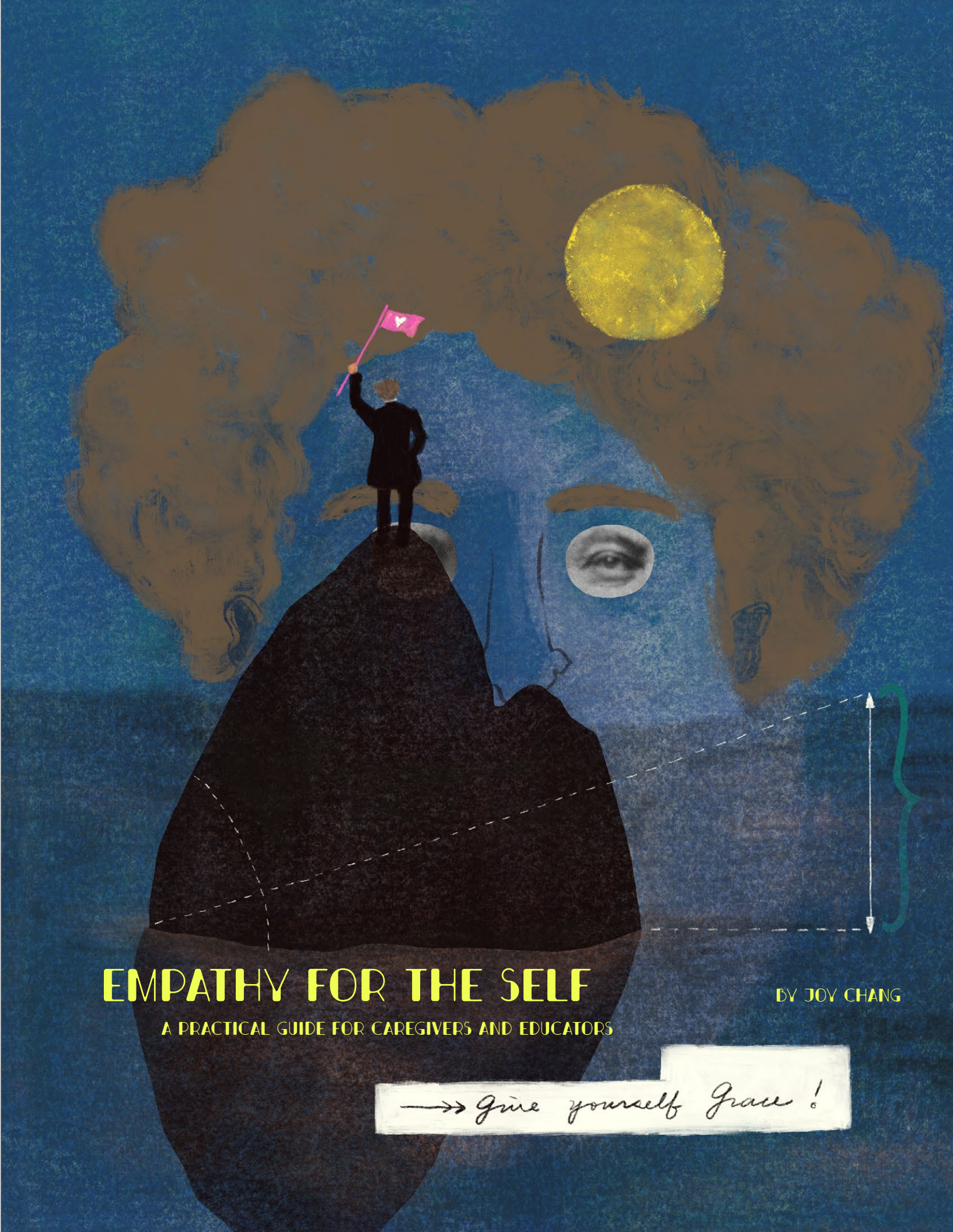
Between the ages of six and eight, children's self-reflection and perspective-taking abilities continue to develop. They gain a more complex understanding of right and wrong, and guilt tends to become more stable. For example, they might say something like, "I know I shouldn't take things that don't belong to me". However, individual differences and situational factors can influence a child's ability to engage in self-reflection and guilt. Intense emotions like anger or sadness may hinder their capacity to effectively consider someone else's perspective.

What's the difference between guilt and shame? Read more about this on page 8.

To support empathy for the self during this stage, adults can promote healthy moral development by linking children's actions to their consequences. By explaining the impact of their behaviour on others and focusing on actions rather than character, adults encourage children to take responsibility for their actions without negatively labeling them. For example, instead of saying, "You're a mean brother for hurting your sister's feelings," it is more beneficial to say, "When you knocked down your sister's toys, it hurt her feelings."

By adopting these approaches, adults can contribute to the development of empathy for the self in children, fostering their emotional intelligence, self-compassion, and moral growth. Empathy for the self is a crucial aspect of emotional development. Just as we extend empathy and compassion to others, it is essential to treat ourselves with the same kindness.

How do I practice empathy for myself? Check out our top strategies in our article, *Empathy for the Self: A Practical Guide for Caregivers and Educators* on the next page.



DID YOU KNOW THAT PRACTICING SELF-CARE HELPS US PROMOTE KINDNESS AND EMPATHY TOWARDS OTHERS AS WELL? SO, WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN PRACTICE EMPATHY FOR YOURSELF?

It's a weekday afternoon.

You're rushing to pick up your child from school to get to soccer practice. After coaxing your child off the school playground, they finally get in the car but continue whining. You're already running late and now you're stuck in traffic. Uh-oh! The snacks just spilled all over the car seat in the back.

What do you do?

TAKE A PAUSE

It's OK to take a moment to pause and check-in before reacting. Ask yourself: "How am I feeling right now?" Although it may feel unnatural to pause, giving yourself an extra moment can make a difference in your emotional well-being. It is a meaningful act of empathy to thoughtfully respond instead of reacting immediately and possibly saying something you may regret and escalate your emotions. While it is important to care about others, it is equally important to care about yourself (Malti, 2020).

ACKNOWLEDGE YOURSELF!

Give yourself grace. Acknowledge the positive and the challenging moments of the day. Acknowledge that you're getting through the day, and sometimes that's good enough for now.

TALK ABOUT IT

Show yourself the same compassion, gentleness, and patience that you give to the children. What would you

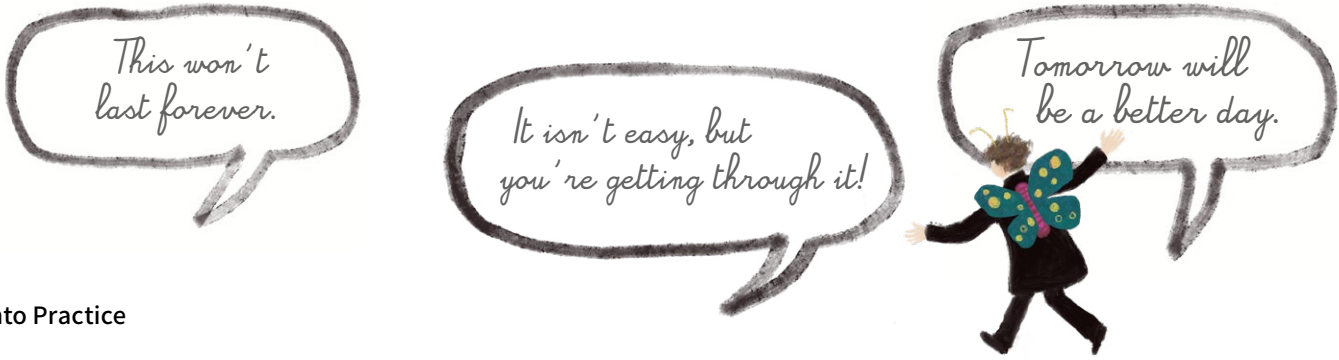
say to them if they are having a hard day? Use the same compassion with yourself as you do with children. This can create positive changes to your life and those around you (Malti, 2020).

BE YOUR OWN MODEL

Children learn through observing and imitating. When they observe how you react to challenges and big emotions, they learn how you cope with your mistakes and how to behave towards yourself. When these moments arise, we can create a warm, inclusive environment to teach children how they can show up for others while being aware of their own needs (Freire, 2007; Walker, 2014, as cited in Malti, 2020). For example, you can model kindness towards yourself through language such as, "We are running late, but it's OK, I can't control the traffic" or actions, "I'm feeling frustrated, I need to take some deep breaths first." What better way to teach children than by embracing these opportunities as teaching moments?

Now, give yourself a pat on the back for taking the first step towards empathy for the self — taking the time to learn about it! It's important to remind yourself that practicing empathy for the self is a learning curve. It's OK that some days you are not your best self, it also communicates to children that everyone has those days. When those days come around, you can turn to your loved ones and let their empathy guide you through.

Read about how one father found self-compassion as a stay-at-home parent on page 28.



PARENTS SPILL THE YOGURT

A Call For
Self-Compassion



BY PETER WONG

Parents know how important it is to create a safe space for children to fail and make mistakes. So why is it so hard to create space for our own failures?

My eldest son is standing in the dining room, wailing at the tragic loss of his vanilla yogurt, splattered all over the floor. I am both exasperated by his carelessness and baffled by his emotional overreaction. Part of me wants to blurt out, “I told you to be careful!” But I resist the instinct – because I’ve gone down that route plenty of times before and I know it doesn’t work for him.

Instead, I grab a roll of paper towel and tap him playfully on the head. “No biggie! I spill food all the time. You should hear about the time I dropped a miso soup in my friend’s purse. Come help me clean this up and let’s get a new yogurt.”

Life can be hard for kids. They make all sorts of mistakes – that’s just the nature of being a kid. And as difficult as it can be at times, we as parents have the opportunity to make space for those mistakes. When the yogurt gets spilt, a little compassion and empathy can go a long way.

But life can be hard for parents too, and we also make all sorts of mistakes – because that’s the nature of being a parent! We lose our temper, we say things we wish we could take back, and sometimes we steal our children’s Halloween candy and then lie about it. **The great challenge for today’s parent is this: in the same way that we make space for our children’s mishaps and questionable decisions, we need to make space for our own as well.**

Creating space for your own yogurt spills

I became a full-time stay at home dad in 2018, and I dove into the role with all the confidence in the world. My first career was in education – if I can get a classroom full of teenagers to do their homework, how hard could it be to get my two boys to eat their lunches?

It didn’t take long, of course, for me to realize that I had grossly miscalculated. The transition was a rocky one, and I often felt

like I was failing as a parent. I was spilling the metaphorical parenting yogurt aplenty and I’d spend many nights wondering if I was cut out for this parenting gig at all.

For those of you who can relate, I’d like to share a few principles that were helpful in bringing me back to a healthier, more objective perspective:

Remember that you are a limited resource, and that’s OK! As a parent, you are a powerful instrument of comfort, love, and guidance for your children. But you are also a vulnerable and limited resource! It’s natural to let our children’s needs eclipse our own, but sometimes you don’t have anything left to give, and that’s OK too.

Catch yourself doing it right. It’s a lot easier to remember the times you got it wrong than it is to remember the times you got it right. Naturally, this skews us towards a negative perception of self. Making an extra effort to note and celebrate

the times you got it right can lead you to a more balanced perspective.

When the inner critic takes over, borrow the eyes of a loved one.

Sometimes we get fixated on our mistakes, and we can conclude with a fair amount of certainty that we’re just terrible parents. When you find yourself in that place, confide in someone who knows you and loves you. Most of the time, they’ll be able to give you a more objective and balanced perspective on how you’re actually doing as a parent.

So next time you’re feeling down about yourself, remember that you’re not alone! We’re all just making it up as we go and we’re all spilling yogurt all over the place. Have a chuckle, grab some paper towel, and let’s clean this mess up together.



Self-Care or Selfish?

Youth Reflections on Embracing Self-Care and Inner Strengths

IN A WORLD FILLED WITH HIGH DEMANDS AND DEADLINES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, IT'S CRUCIAL TO PAUSE AND REFLECT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE. WE SPOKE TO YOUTH TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR UNIQUE APPROACHES TO SELF-CARE AND HOW THEY DEAL WITH DIFFICULTIES.

By Maya Awad

Self-care is a term that's been thrown around a lot lately. Some see it as a trendy buzzword, while others view it as an essential component of mental well-being. Despite the mixed opinions, research has made one thing clear: self-care isn't selfish, it's a necessity (Scott, 2023). Self-care isn't just about bubble baths and face masks. It's about showing yourself the same

kindness you'd show a friend in need (Malti, 2020). It's a journey of self-compassion and prioritizing your well-being.

The teen years are often filled with emotional highs and lows, so self-care and self-compassion can be very important for this age group. Let's dive into the world of self-care through the eyes of two teens

exploring their self-care routines, positive self-talk, and recognizing their strengths.

Self-care

Self-care is taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. Katelyn, 13-years-old, believes self-care is about



FOCUS ON THE NEXT STEP, NOT THE WHOLE STAIRCASE

“taking time for yourself, doing things you like, and making you happy.” She loves taking time to draw or watch her favourite movies or TV shows. Seventeen-year-old Andy sees self-care as doing simple things that are good for his future, like brushing his teeth, making sure to eat breakfast, and reading. He says, “It’s crucial to make self-care a priority because it affects everything from health to relationships.”

When I asked about whether they ever felt guilty taking some time for themselves, Katelyn said that she does when she wants to relax but has lots of homework or tests coming up but is satisfied with her self-care routine overall. Meanwhile, Andy expressed feeling badly sometimes when treating himself to a fancy meal from a financial aspect. To make up for

it, he will work extra hours at his part-time job. He is interested in starting journaling and stretching exercises to boost his mental and physical health.

Positive self-talk

Positive self-talk is an inner voice that makes you feel good about yourself and everything going on in your life. When asked whether they practice positive self-talk, especially during challenging times, Katelyn shared that while she doesn’t have specific phrases or affirmations, she may cheer herself up when stressed with positive thoughts like, “Your hair looks great today!” or “You’re going to see your friends today.” Andy looks at the bigger picture and imagines how his choices will shape his future. Helpful phrases Andy tells him-

self are:
“Focus on the next step, not the whole staircase” and “You’re only hurting yourself by staying negative.”

Personal strengths

Personal strengths are the skills and actions that you can do well. Katelyn feels confident speaking in public and stays cool under pressure and told me that her friends recognize that she’s “friendly and confident.” Andy’s good with numbers, hands-on tasks, and loves helping people and learning new things. He reported that his co-workers find him “very helpful and curious about things.”

Self-care isn't one-size-fits-all. Here are some tips to make it your own:

Get moving! Dance to your favorite playlist, take a stroll through your neighborhood, or sign up for a beginner's yoga class.

Fuel your body with nourishing foods like a smoothie bursting with greens and berries. Keep a reusable water bottle with you throughout the day and infuse it with refreshing fruits like lemon or cucumber for extra flavour.

Snuggle up with your pillow and create a cozy bedtime routine with dim lighting and a calming cup of herbal tea. Unwind with a good book or soothing music to help you drift off to sleep peacefully.

Take a breather with meditation or simple breathing exercises. Find a quiet space to sit and focus on your breath or try a guided meditation app to help calm your mind.

Pour your thoughts onto paper. Use your journal as a safe space to express your thoughts, feelings, and experiences without judgment. Write about your day or things you're grateful for.

Discover your strengths. Reflect on the best compliments you've ever received or moments where you felt proud of yourself. Recognize your unique talents and qualities, whether it's your kindness, creativity, or ability to make others laugh.

Nature's calling! Spend some quality time outdoors soaking up the sunshine. Have a picnic in the park with friends or sit outside and listen to nature.

Stay connected. Plan a movie night with your friends, organize a game night with your family, or schedule video calls with loved ones who live far away.

Speak kindly to yourself with positive affirmations:

- o I've got this!
- o I believe in myself.
- o I'm worthy of love and happiness.
- o Every challenge is an opportunity for growth.
- o I am proud of the progress I've made.
- o I'm grateful for the good stuff in my life.

Finally, I asked whether there was anything else they thought parents and teachers should know about young people and this topic. One observation shared was that students often forget to take breaks due to school and social pressure, so adults and teachers should encourage downtime. It's important for both teens and adults to recognize the power of self-care and advocate for their well-being unapologetically. Let's continue to spark conversations about self-care everywhere, from dinner tables to classrooms, fostering a culture of support and understanding.

And remember, self-care isn't selfish!



Through the Eyes of a Research Assistant

A recent University of Toronto graduate aspiring to pursue a career in psychotherapy shares her experience working at a psychology research lab.

By Maya Awad

Research consistently shows the impact of the environment and familial context on a child's social and emotional well-being (Malti, 2020). These factors lay the foundation for a child's future cognitive and emotional capabilities, influencing their ability to navigate challenges and form healthy relationships. This understanding has fueled my desire to advocate for supportive environments that foster growth which led me to join the Laboratory for Social-Emotional Development and Intervention (SEDI Lab), first by volunteering as a research assistant now working here part time.



Beyond the classroom

At the SEDI Lab, we focus on ways to support caregivers, educators, and communities in nurturing children's healthy development. As a psychology student, I learned various theories and principles about child development and mental health. As a research assistant, I was trained to incorporate research-informed practices and strategies into our resources to promote social-emotional development in children. I contribute to the development of our educational materials and assist in planning and coordinating our community-based events and workshops. I also received training to facilitate sessions, lead activities, and moderate discussions about mental health and well-being during events to engage participants. My role has allowed me to extend research beyond the lab and help transform knowledge into action.

As a recent graduate aspiring to pursue a career in psychotherapy, this experience has been instrumental in shaping my understanding of human development and the factors that influence mental health and well-being.

It offers a unique blend of academic and practical application, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world settings while making a positive impact in their communities. I've supported projects at the SEDI Lab such as our arts-based children's curriculum designed to promote social-emotional development. I also help plan our community-based events which allow children the opportunity to participate in evidence-based activities to learn more about mental health and well-being.

The SEDI Lab has a collaborative and supportive environment which fosters learning, creativity, and innovation, making it an enriching experience for anyone looking to gain valuable skills and insights in this field. I highly encourage students to seek out experience in a research lab, no matter which field you're interested in as it is a wonderful way to gain experience outside of

the classroom and can be extremely beneficial for personal and professional growth.

Final thoughts

In reflecting on my journey at the SEDI Lab, I realize that understanding social-emotional development is not just a scientific principle but a collective responsibility.

As we look deeper into this exploration together, remember that by creating a supportive environment and recognizing the crucial role caregivers and educators play, we contribute to a future where every child can flourish emotionally and thrive. I feel deeply privileged to be able to contribute to meaningful projects that aim to promote the well-being and ethical development of children and youth.

Pei & Maya set up for the art exhibit



GROWING OUR



By José Chacón

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

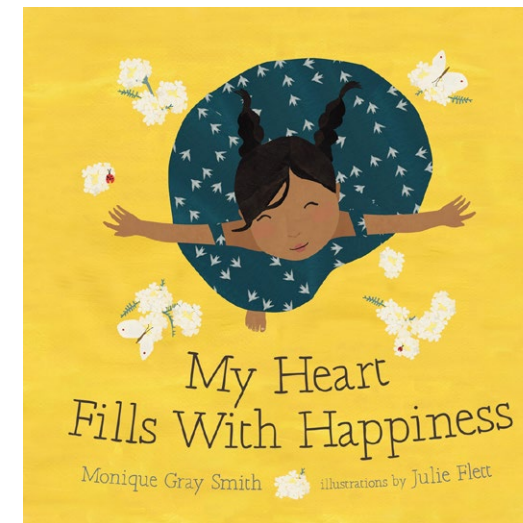
WE ARE CONSTANTLY LEARNING ABOUT OUR EMOTIONS AND OF OTHERS, SO CHECK OUT THIS MONTH'S BOOK CLUB TO FIND OUT OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ON GREAT READS FOR ALL AGE GROUPS.

In our issue on empathy for others, Dr. Ruth Speidel highlighted how children can benefit from reading, even more beneficial when reading is guided by parents and caregivers. Her words took me on a trip down memory lane. When I started learning how to read, my parents used to select small articles from our hometown newspaper, so I could read them aloud. My mother, being an elementary school teacher, thought this was a cool exercise to improve vocabulary and comprehension. After I finished reading, she would ask me two questions: "What did you learn from the reading?" and "What was the central idea of the reading?"

Although the love for books can start at any age, books have different audiences. With that in mind, we have these fantastic reads for young children, teens, and adults.

We hope these books help foster a conversation that will spark reflection and contribute to enriching your knowledge on social-emotional development. Remember to check our previous issues for more great book recommendations.

Happy reading!

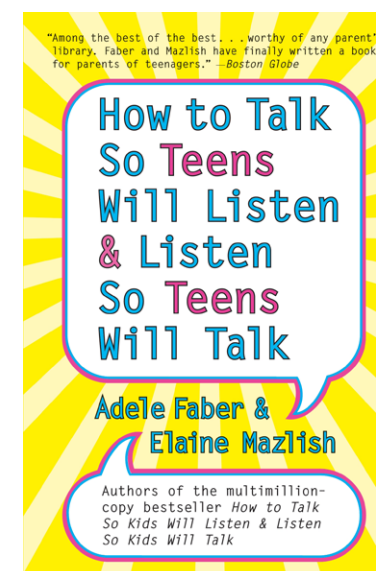


My Heart Fills with Happiness

Written by Monique Gray Smith

Illustrated by Julie Flett

My Heart Fills with Happiness is a book that teaches children and adults the joy of love and kindness by cherishing every moment we experience in life. As one reviewer in good reads put it, "this book is cozy and warm."



How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk

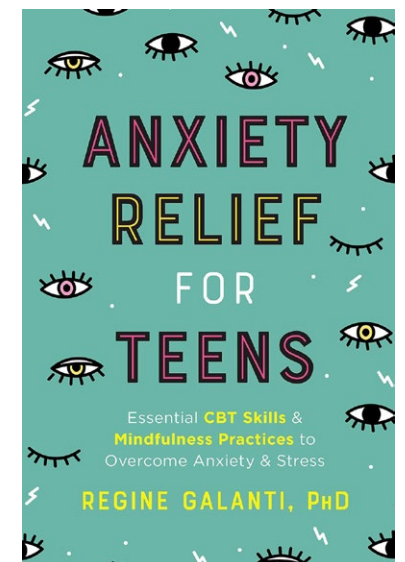
By Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Parenting is a long developmental journey. Sometimes each stage, according to your children's age, will require different skills. For example, it is not the same to exercise persuasion on a 3-year-old child compared to a 13-year-old one, and this is what motivated Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish to write *How to Talk So Teens Will Listen and Listen So Teens Will Talk*, a follow up to their popular parenting book *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen*. The authors provide a great insight into the teenage years by drawing from personal experience and advice from experts. As they both shared with *The Guardian* newspaper, "These are not techniques to manipulate behaviour," the authors stress, "they are skills to create a positive emotional environment."

Anxiety Relief for Teens: Essential CBT Skills & Mindfulness Practices to Overcome Anxiety & Stress

By Regine Galanti

Teenage years can be tough. It's a time in our lives when we are discovering ourselves, building our self-identities and experiencing a whirlwind of emotions. Everything moves so fast and quickly that anxiety might kick in. Dr. Regina Galanti wrote *Anxiety Relief for Teens: Essential CBT Skills & Mindfulness Practices to Overcome Anxiety & Stress*, a book based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) to help teenagers change their thoughts and promote emotional regulation.





L.O.V.E.

YOURSELF

By Joy Chang

You can express kindness through acts of self-care such as understanding your own capacities, acknowledging your limitations with gentleness, and applying the same strategies you use to comfort others (Neff 2011; Malti, 2020). It's important to acknowledge your emotional capacities and manage your emotions as they arise. Regulating your emotions allows you to have the capacity to support children through their big emotions.

Think of the emergency procedures on airplanes: You have to put the oxygen mask on yourself before helping others.

We have come up with the L.O.V.E. acronym as a guide to being an emotion coach for children (and yourselves!) through emotion regulation. By following these four steps, you can become skilled at being your very own emotion coach as well.

LABEL EMOTIONS

The first step is to acknowledge you are feeling an emotion. Pause—ask yourself: “What am I feeling right now?” and give yourself a moment to feel it. Then, try to label what you’re feeling. For example, “I’m starting to feel frustrated.” “This is stressing me out.”

OPPORTU- NITY TO GROW CLO- SER (TO YOURSELF)

Self-reflection supports kind emotions and actions (Malti, 2020); so, dive a bit deeper, feel a little more. You might ask yourself: “When was the last time I felt this way? What is triggering these emotions? Why do these emotions feel challenging to me?” When these emotions feel bigger than yourself, it’s ok to seek help.

Go to page 58 to see our community resource listings in Ontario and Canada.

VALIDATE EMOTIONS

Validate your own emotions by acknowledging that these emotions are real and it’s ok to feel this way. Talk yourself through it: “I’m feeling frustrated because we are running late, and we were late last time too.”

ELABO- RATE ABOUT EMOTIONS

The ability to engage in introspection, which is reflecting on your thoughts and feelings, allows you to engage in personal growth and develop an understanding of similarity between yourself and others (Malti, 2020). Here are some ways to elaborate on your emotions:

- i. Identify signs
 - “I’m getting short with my responses”
 - “My face is feeling hot”
- ii. Identify causes of emotions
 - “The room is very loud and I am feeling overwhelmed”
 - “Shouting makes me feel anxious”
- iii. Ask yourself open-ended questions:
 - “How can I calm down?”
 - “What did I do last time I felt ___?”

MY AWESOME SELFIE!

INTRODUCING SELF-COMPASSION TO CHILDREN

A QUICK AND EASY ART
ACTIVITY TO TEACH
CHILDREN EMPATHY FOR
THEMSELVES!

By Chanel Tsang



"I'm always happy and I am really
good at gymnastics."
Avery, age 8, Georgetown

Families, childcare, and schools are doing wonderful work in promoting social-emotional development and encouraging a “culture of kindness” within children. From learning manners to thinking of others’ feelings to supporting children in making good—and kind—choices.

take a larger dip during these years compared to boys (Mlawer et al., 2021). So, it is helpful to build up our children’s inner voices now so that they can grow strong and be heard clearly over the noise of these challenges.

MY AWESOME SELFIE ACTIVITY (ALL AGES)

What you need

Paper, pencil crayons or crayons, photos of friends and family (optional), mirror (optional)

What you do

- (Optional) Look through some photos of family members and friends together. Ask your child what they like about each person.
- Ask your child to draw a picture of themselves. Older children might like to use a mirror or photo to draw from. (Another option for older children is to make an abstract collage of themselves using magazines, flyers, etc.!)
- Once they’re finished drawing, ask them to think of three things they like about themselves. Encourage them to think about things they can do, their actions, and other parts of their personality rather than how they look. They can write down some words on their picture as a reminder if they like.
- Your child can keep their self-portrait in their room or somewhere they see often to remind themselves of how awesome they are!

Kindness means being compassionate towards others and ourselves (Malti, 2020). So, it makes sense to encourage compassion and care for themselves in parallel to the message to be kind to others.

ME, MYSELF, AND I

This is a quick and simple art activity you can do at home or in the classroom to make space for children to begin practicing self-reflection and mindfulness as they pause to notice their feelings, as well as positive self-talk (positive affirmations, being understanding towards ourselves when things go wrong, etc.). These are all important and useful practices that can support success in all aspects of their life, from relationships to academics.

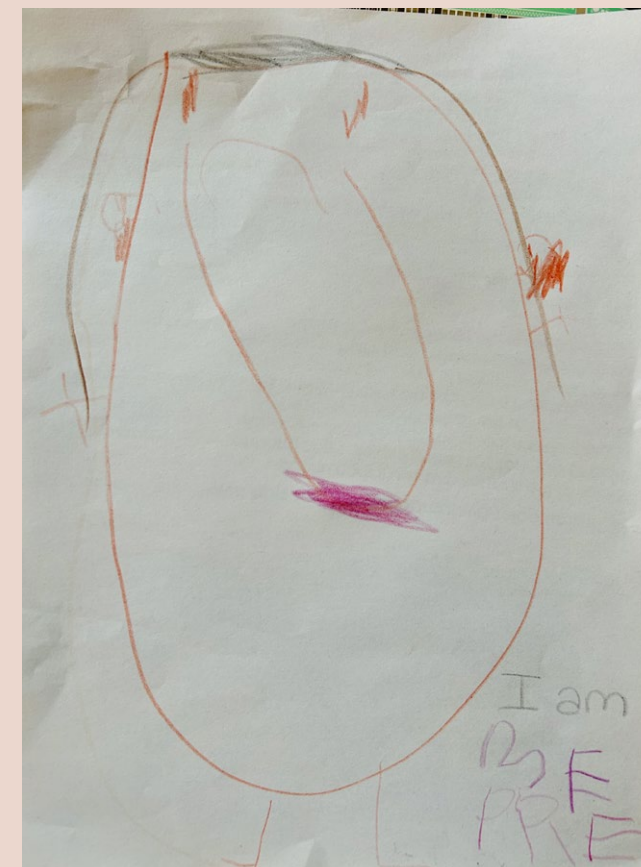
By encouraging them to do so early and consistently, this can help children build up their self-image and focus on their positive: I am kind. I am strong. I am funny. I can run very fast! This becomes more important as they reach adolescence when self-esteem generally drops during this time until they reach adulthood. We can see how their self-worth may become more tangled up with external forces such as comparing themselves to their peers, the opinions of their friends, and, increasingly, images from media. This is especially true for girls as their self-esteem tends to

"I like my earrings because my friend has the same ones. I like my jacket because the hoodie can come off."
Deanna, age 5, Burlington



"My heart is beautiful."
Noor, age 4, Toronto

"What I like about myself is my hair!"
Keira, age 12, Markham



"I am me."
Presley, age 4, Toronto



"Fire truck!"
Taj, age 2, Toronto



"I like that I'm a kind person and funny too."
Spencer, age 10, Georgetown
Bonus drawing of an astronaut in a speech bubble because those are Spencer's two favourite things!

CONTRIBUTORS OF pip o. GAZETTE ISSUE 01 • 2024

The names are arranged in alphabetical order.



Maya Awad is a recent UTM graduate who majored in psychology and biology for health sciences. She works at the CCDMP as a knowledge translation assistant and supports various projects within the CCDMP. In her free time, she enjoys baking and going for walks with her little puppy, Sasha.



José Chacón is a SEDI lab volunteer that loves to support people. He is a fourth-year psychology major with a double minor in sociology, and women and gender studies at the University of Toronto Mississauga. He is very passionate about psychology, and in his spare time he loves to go for long bike rides. José cycles on weekends between 35k to 70k. His longest bike ride has been 85k.



Joy Chang is the project coordinator for the Building Emotion Regulation and Empathy (BEE) project at the SEDI Lab. She received her Master of Education in Developmental Psychology and Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto in 2020. After graduating, she provided therapy to children with autism spectrum disorder and supported their families as an Instructor Therapist. In her free time, Joy loves to explore new restaurants and cafes, and hang out with her cat, Sheila.



Pei-Yu Chang is an illustrator, author, college lecturer and translator based in Münster, Germany, originally from Taipei, Taiwan. She illustrates, writes and translates for small and big people. As a kid growing up in her family's printing factory, she loved to collect the leftover scraps of paper and other materials for her artworks. The smell of paper and ink mixed in the air reminds her of home.



Sian Day is the Community Engagement Coordinator with the R-BLISS project at the CCDMP which supports the social-emotional development of Black and Indigenous children and families in Peel. Sian came to the CCDMP after graduating from the University of Toronto Mississauga with a bachelor's in English and Sociology, and Sheridan College's Social Service Worker program. Her interest lies in working with marginalized communities and tackling social injustices and inequalities. In her free time, she enjoys watching and playing soccer.



Riad El-Karout is UTM alumni who majored in psychology. He works at the CCDMP as a research assistant and as a part of the social media marketing team. For fun, he plays guitar and sings at open mics downtown!



Zainab Haseeb is an upcoming graduate student at the University of Toronto, soon to enter the direct entry PhD program. She joined the SEDI lab in 2020 during her second year, contributing to the ADAPT team before transitioning to RAISE.



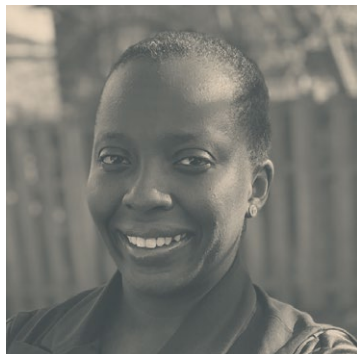
Mikayla Hamilton is a fourth-year student at the University of Toronto pursuing a double major in psychology and health studies. She is an administrative and research assistant at the SEDI Lab. Her current focus is her work on the *pip o.*'s Kindness Hall of Fame campaign. In her spare time, Mikayla loves playing volleyball, listening to podcasts, and going to dinner.



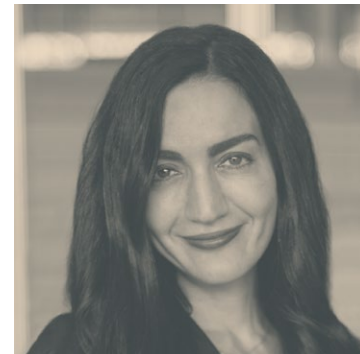
Michelle Melvin is a recent graduate of the University of Toronto with an Honours Bachelor's in Science, specializing in Forensic Psychology. She is our social media coordinator and *pip o.* volunteer at the SEDI Lab. Michelle is a big moviegoer and loves Marvel and anime.



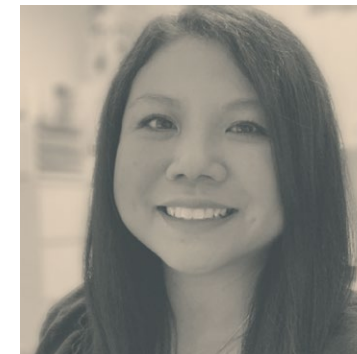
Dr. Ruthie Speidel is a developmental psychologist. She is a postdoctoral fellow at the SEDI Lab, overseeing the development of social-emotional development training for caregivers and educators. Ruthie lives in Whitby with her dog, George. They love going on hikes and swimming in the lake together.



Deinma Iruenabere was coordinating the R-BLISS project at CCDMP. The project is aimed at promoting educators' capacities in nurturing mental health and social-emotional development in Black and Indigenous children and families living in Peel Region. Her work as a Registered Early Childhood Educator has given her firsthand experience in encouraging social-emotional development in young children. In her free time, you'd find her engaging in fun activities with her 3-year-old son and 6-month-old daughter.



Dr. Tina Malti is a developmental psychologist and a registered clinical child psychologist. She is a professor of Psychology and directs the Laboratory for Social-Emotional Development and Intervention (SEDI Lab) at the University of Toronto. Tina feels passionate about research aimed at contributing to the potential for kindness and well-being in all children. In her free time, she likes meeting for coffee with friends, reading, and playing the piano.



Chanel Tsang oversees knowledge translation and community engagement initiatives at the SEDI Lab and is the managing editor of the *pip o. Gazette*. She has worked with children and families for over 15 years in schools and in EarlyON and Child and Family Centres. In her free time, she works on her podcast for children, *Peace Out*, all about social-emotional learning and mindfulness.



Peter Wong is currently a stay-at-home dad/living room dance party extraordinaire. He has recently returned to grad school with hopes of becoming a psychotherapist, so long as he is able to stay out of the principal's office.

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Community Support Resources

 We all need help sometimes. If you are feeling overwhelmed or distressed, please consider reaching out to friends and family, and local community resources. We've included mental health supports, crisis response lines, and other resources here.

- = Open to all
- A = Services for Adults
- Y = Services for Youth

Peel Region

Associated Youth Services of Peel

- ▲ 160 Traders Blvd. E. Suite 100 Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 3K7
- ☎ 1-800-762-8377 (Toll Free)
- ✉ general@aysp.ca
- * 24/7 Crisis Response Service

EveryMind Peel

- ▲ 85A Aventura Court Mississauga, Ontario

L5T 2Y6

☎ 905-795-3500

✉ info@everymind.ca

- * Free, confidential and high quality mental health services to children, youth, young adults (up to age 25) and families in the Region of Peel.

Ernestine's Women's Shelter

- Please note that we do not publicize the location of our shelter to protect the privacy and ensure the safety and security of our clients.
- ☎ Crisis Line: 416-746-3701 press 0
- ✉ contact@ernestines.ca
- * Emergency shelter for women and mothers with children, who are single or those with children who are currently experiencing abuse and need immediate shelter. Shelter program helps women, their children/youth heal from violence through counseling, child and youth programs, housing support and more
- * 24/7 crisis response

DO YOU HAVE A TEENAGER BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12 AND 17? DO YOU LIVE IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA?

If you answered "Yes", you are invited to participate in our lab's new online study about youth's resilience and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic!

If you are interested or want to learn more, please email us at airy.maltlab@utoronto.ca

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board, University of Toronto

Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre

- ▲ 3650 Dixie Road, Suite 103, Mississauga, Ontario, L4Y 3V9
- ☎ 905-629-1873
- ✉ info@dixiebloor.ca
- * Community oriented programs which are offered free of charge and responsive to the needs of community members.

Mississauga Halton Central Intake Program

- ▲ 2401 Bristol Circle, Suite 105 Oakville, ON

L6H 5S9

☎ 905-338-4123

✉ one-Link@haltonhealthcare.com

- ✓ A single point of access for referrals to 10 Mississauga Halton Addiction and Mental Health service providers.

Our Place Peel

- ▲ 3579 Dixie Road, Mississauga, ON L4Y 2B3
- ☎ 905-238-1383
- ✉ info@ourplacepeel.org
- * Our Place is a registered non-profit agency that provides shelter, support and hope for homeless and at-risk youth aged 16-24 in the Region of Peel.

Support House - Mississauga - Centre for Innovation in Peer Support

- ▲ 165 Cross Ave, Suite 201 Oakville Ontario, L6J 0A9
- ☎ 1-833-845-9355
- ✉ centreinfo@supporthouse.ca
- * Provide wellness-based, peer-led self-help and social connections programming throughout Mississauga and Halton for individuals living with mental health and/or addiction challenges

Ontario

211 Ontario

- Various locations for services and resources across Ontario.
- 🌐 <https://211ontario.ca/>
- ☎ Toll-free: 1-877-330-3213 OR dial 211
- ✉ <https://211ontario.ca/contact-211-ontario/#email-enquiries-link>
- * 211 is a helpline and online database of Ontario's community and social services

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

- Various locations and services. Please visit <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/about-camh/contact-camh>
- ☎ 416 535-8501, press 2 OR toll free: 1

☎ 1-800-463-2338

✉ info@camh.ca

- * 24/7 crisis response
- * Various services and resources for mental health and addiction

Children's Mental Health Ontario

- Find a child and youth mental health centre near you.
- 🌐 <https://cmho.org/findhelp/>
- ☎ (416) 921-2109
- ✉ info@cmho.org
- * Find child and youth mental health centres; Walk-in services and 24/7 crisis response resources near you through their online database.



ConnexOntario

- Various locations for services and resources across Ontario. Please visit
- 🌐 <https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/>
- ☎ 1-866-531-2600
- ✉ <https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/send-email>
- * information and referral services focusing on mental health, addiction, and gambling, in the province.
- * 24/7 phone, web-chat and email support.

Telehealth Ontario

- 🌐 <https://healthconnectontario.health.gov.on.ca/static/guest/home>
- ☎ 1-866-797-0000
- * 24/7, free support
- * Healthcare and addition support from nurses

Good2Talk

- ☎ 1-866-925-5454
- Text GOOD2TALKON to 686868
- * Free, 24/7 support
- * For post-secondary students in Ontario (1-833-292-3698 for Nova Scotia)

Get Involved!

Do you have a little scientist at home?

Join our research studies and help us learn more about child development!

Eligibility:
Children from 6 months to 17 years

Participate in Our Research



Canada

Talk Suicide Canada ●

- 🌐 <https://talksuicide.ca>
- ☎ 1-833-456-4566
- Text 45645 (4 p.m. - midnight ET)
- * 24/7 crisis response

Kids Help Phone ●

- 🌐 kidshelpphone.ca
- ☎ 1-800-668-6868
- Text 686868
- ✉ info@kidshelpphone.ca
- * 4/7 counselling via phone, online chat

Canada Suicide Prevention Service ●

- 🌐 <https://www.crisisser.vicescanada.ca/en/>
- ☎ 1-866-797-0000
- ☎ 1-833-456-4566
- ✉ <https://www.crisisser.vicescanada.ca/en/contact-us/>
- * 24/7 crisis response

Hope for Wellness ●

- 🌐 <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>
- ☎ 1-855-242-3310
- * 24/7 counselling via phone or on-line chat
- * For First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples
- * Provides counselling and community referrals for emotional support and/or crisis intervention
- * Support available in English and French as well as Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut (although those three languages are not in

Wellness Together Canada ●

- 🌐 <https://www.wellnesstogether.ca>
- ☎ For youth: 1-888-668-6810
- For youth: Text WELLNESS to 686868
- ☎ For Adults: 1-866-585-0445
- For Adults: Text WELLNESS to 741741
- * Free, virtual, 24/7 one-on-one counselling via phone
- * For Canadians in Canada or abroad
- * Support for mental health and

substance abuse

- * Credible guides, programs, articles, and information on support

Families for Addiction Recovery ●

- 🌐 <https://www.farcana.org/>
- ☎ 1-855-377-6677 ext. 207
- * Free, one-on-one support via phone call
- * Monday-Friday 1 pm -3 pm EST
- * For parents or caregivers of any age who struggle with addictions

LGBT National Hotline ●

- 🌐 <https://www.lgbthotline.org/>
- ☎ For everyone: 888-843-4564
- ☎ For 25 and younger: 800-246-7743

- ☎ For adults over 50: 888-234-7243
- ☎ For coming out support: 888-688-5428
- * Free, one-on-one counselling via instant messaging or phone call
- * Variable hours (4pm - 12 am Mon-Fri and 12 pm-5pm weekends EST)
- * Programs, resources and information for all

YouthSpace.ca

- Text 778-783-0177
- * Free, one-on-one counselling via direct messaging
- * For youth under 30 in Canada
- * Open 6pm-midnight PST, everyday

Are you interested in child development research and intervention development?

We're looking for volunteers!

APPLY NOW



HEART EXERCISE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Enough space to move around in
- Optional: A timer

- 1** To begin, ask your child to put their hand over their heart to see if they can feel their heartbeat.
- 2** Jump up and down in place, or do jumping jacks, dance, or run around for one minute with your child.
- 3** When the minute is up, have them sit down and put a hand over their heart again. Instruct them to close their eyes and pay attention to their heartbeat and their breath as well. Help them note their quick heartbeat and breathing and then, over time, help them focus on the change in their body as they relax and regain their breath. (It may be hard for younger children to feel their heartbeat so you can focus on the change in their breathing at first)

This is a good exercise to help your child pay more attention to their breathing and to see how changes to their breathing can mean different things- For example, breathing faster or harder can be from exercise or may be from feeling angry or anxious. As they become more mindful and notice these changes, they can start to understand how our bodies respond to different feelings and situations. This can lead them to start looking for ways to calm down or asking for help earlier as they start to understand themselves better.

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