

Becoming a Parent

The Joy of Parenting

Being a parent can be one of the most rewarding roles an individual can experience. It can also be one of the most difficult. Children can be a source of happiness and joy, but can also be a source of stress, frustration, worry and heartache. As your child grows and learns, so too must you.

Parenting and mental health

It is not uncommon for young parents to experience some significant challenges when adding a new member to the family. Meeting the needs of your new child sees significant changes to how you operate. Sleep disruption, less time for regular chores and hobbies, less time for other family members including your partner and other children, and less social interactions in general are all in the norm. For some, having a child can be quite isolating, disconnecting and even distressing. Many experience mental health issues when becoming a parent without recognising it as such. Increased anger and frustration, higher stress levels, lower mood, anxiety and panic attacks can all be signs that indicate a struggle with adjusting to this life change.

It's ok to not be ok

For many there is a struggle to maintain a public persona of coping or managing with the challenges of parenting, even when the opposite is true. Whilst it is important to hold onto a sense of hope and resilience in getting through the tough times, it's also important to be honest with yourself and those around you when you aren't coping. Importantly, it's ok if you aren't coping with it. You aren't alone.

It's important to talk about it with your partner or a trusted friend or reach out for professional help.

Develop your parenting style by understanding yourself

We've all heard the phrase 'children don't come with a manual'. Whilst this is technically true, there has been much research done to understand the complexities of development during childhood. There is a growing body of evidence showing how you relate to, connect, and interact with your child greatly influences their relationships with others, resilience, and outlook on life. Children look to their care givers for attachment and security, to have a safe base to go out from and explore the world, with the knowledge safety is available and not far away. Thus, it can be hard if parents themselves struggle with these aspects, or have had ruptures in their own upbringing that deviate from safety, nurturance and a sense of security. Having an awareness and curiosity towards understanding this is key to help avoid drawbacks of your own past experiences with your child.

Avoid the Pressure of Being the Perfect Parent and having the perfect child

There may be some days where you end the day feeling like you haven't met the mark as a parent. Social media floods your feed with how other parents are doing it better, handling it better, and ultimately being better at it than you are. This can be especially true when your child behaves in a way that we don't expect or like, such as ➤



throwing a tantrum, drinking, drug taking, sex, bad grades etc. There can be a sense of pressure in trying to fix the situation and get it right all the time, which may in-fact be counterproductive. It's important to acknowledge your own feelings, thoughts and responses to these tough moments, and turn towards who you need to be for yourself and others involved – which may go against how you want to react!

How BSS can help

The EAP service is a great resource to access as a parent during difficult periods and can provide support to both you and your children in times of need. Areas where the EAP can support are:

- ▷ Helping to guide your child to appropriate behaviour at different stages of development.
 - ▷ Navigating behavioural issues – home, school, socially.
 - ▷ Emotional challenges (such as anxiety, depression, excessive worrying, anger).
 - ▷ Communicating effectively with your child.
 - ▷ Family dynamic concerns.
 - ▷ Other family issues (such as parental separation, sibling rivalry, death of family member).
 - ▷ Issues with bullying.
 - ▷ Assisting to improve studying skills, motivation, and organisation.
 - ▷ Drug and alcohol concerns.
 - ▷ Identity issues.
 - ▷ Being aware of how the way you were parented could positively or negatively influence your interactions with your own child / children.
- ▷ Being an appropriate model for your child.
 - ▷ How to keep children buffered from adult issues such as those associated with relationship difficulties.

Other resources

raisingchildren.net.au

A resource website for supporting and parenting children from pregnancy through to adults.

triplep-parenting.net.au

A scientific evidence program to help guide parents on how to positively parent children of all ages, subsidised by the Australian Government.

familyrelationships.gov.au

An online resource database linking to other resources and websites for various aspects of parenting.

Happyfamilies App

An app available on google play and ios with resources on how to work through common kids challenges and create a healthy environment for your child.



**DOWNLOAD THE BSS APP BY
SCANNING THE QR CODE**



SCAN ME

BSS Main Office: Building C, Level 3, 355 Scarborough Beach Road,
Osborne Park 6017

Counselling available Australia-wide

National and International toll-free counselling support also available 24/7

For more information, please contact: For more information, please contact:

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