**HOW TO HELP KIDS COPE WITH DISAPPOINTMENT**

There is no doubt that children are dealing with disappointment during this time of COVID-19. Anywhere from cancelled summer camps to in-person classes, birthday parties and much more. It can also be equally disappointing for caregivers to see their children experience such disappointments. We as caregivers can take this time to acknowledge that our children have every right to be disappointed, teach them that these times are not forever and take this opportunity to help our children and ourselves learn resilience and how to deal with disappointments in life.

Since children are not capable of comprehending our current situation and are always observing, it is important to keep our emotions in check and model resilience in the face of disappointments. There are many ways caregivers can help empower children to solve their problems and face their disappointments appropriately. Next, we will go over a few of these.

**Empathize first –** One of the most important things you can do is to validate your child’s disappointment. Let them talk about it, cry about it or process it in a way that works for them. This could look like crying, becoming angry or withdrawing. All children respond in different ways in different situations and there is no perfect response to these negative emotions. It is important to remember that coping with disappointment can be difficult for adults as well. So, meet their heated responses with calm ones and save heated discussions for a later time. In times of disappointment what your child needs most is empathy and understanding.

**Help manage expectations –** It is natural to build excitement for things that might go on around us or plans that might happen in the future. Children tend to have that all-or-nothing thinking. When a caregiver says, “A stop at the park might be fun” more than likely your child hears: “Were going to the park and it will be great!” When that does not happen due to unforeseen circumstances, it can be a big disappointment. Caregivers can help reduce stress to these events by modeling and teaching children to manage their emotions by talking about emotions, being able to recognize how others are feeling, identifying coping skills and leading by example.

**Practice delayed gratification –** Presently the world thrives on instant gratification and our children are not learning to understand that things require time and practice. You cannot be a pro ball player or a master at putting together puzzles without practice. We can help children learn to delay gratification by putting routines in place, by scheduling down-time to learn to slow down, to rest in between activities and setting goals.

**Teach self-calming techniques –** Self-calming skills can be a great way to teach children how cope with and get through disappointments. Children all cope and respond differently to stressful times but can learn from their caregivers modeling self-calming skill in these trying situations. Some Self-calming techniques to try are: Breathing the Rainbow – Thinking of your favorite things for each color while taking deep breathes, using artwork to express feelings – Coloring, painting, modeling clay, listen to music, read, go outside or snuggle with a stuffed animal.

It takes time to develop these skills so be patient and remember children also learn by observing and mimicking behaviors; the good and the bad. When caregivers model appropriate coping strategies and manage their emotions children will learn to cope better with their own emotions, disappointments and increase their resilience for the future.

**Resource:** [**https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-help-kids-cope-with-disappointment**](https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-help-kids-cope-with-disappointment)

**Between Families Newsletter**

**Training Questions**

**How to help Children Cope with Disappointment**

**October 2020**

**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONAIRRE FOR ½ HOUR CREDIT**

**Questions:**

1. It is not equally disappointing for caregivers to see their children go through disappointments.
2. True
3. False
4. We as caregivers can take this time to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that our children have every right to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Children can comprehend our current situation.
6. True
7. False
8. List 2 ways caregivers can help children solve their problems and face their disappointments appropriately.

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1. Disappointment could look like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Children tend to have that \_\_\_\_\_\_-or-\_\_\_\_\_\_ thinking.
3. List one way to help children learn to delay gratification.

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1. List 2 self-calming techniques.

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1. Children cope and respond \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to stressful times.
2. Children learn by observing and mimicking behaviors, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.