

There is no doubt that parenting our children is a challenging, rewarding, frustrating, exhausting, and an amazing journey regardless of the structure and individual makeup of our family.

However, lone parenting, blended family parenting and co-parenting can bring its own additional challenges especially if you are on your own.

During these uncertain times, it is important to acknowledge that our feelings around everyday challenges can be harder to cope with.

Research shows us that we may feel more angry, more fearful, less tolerant and resourceful, less compassionate, less joyful and less hopeful about the future.

What is important to remember is that you are not alone, and at times, all other parents feel the same as you and it is ok to feel this way.



Useful sources of information

1. Divorce and separation advice: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/divorce-and-separation/>
2. Helping children and Parents to cope: <http://www.understandingchildhood.net/posts/divorce-and-separation-helping-children-and-parents-cope/>
3. Fathers: <http://www.understandingchildhood.net/posts/fathers/>
4. Grandparents and the extended family: <http://www.understandingchildhood.net/posts/grandparents-and-the-extended-family/>
5. Gingerbread a charity supporting single parent families to live secure, happy and fulfilling lives <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/>
6. Relate - Being Parents Apart <https://www.relate.org.uk/policy-campaigns/our-campaigns/being-parents-apart>

What can you do to help?

Use positive strategies! The following may sound obvious, but in times of stress, these can be the first things to be forgotten:

1. Create a routine. Structure, such as regularly scheduled meals and bedtimes helps your child know what to expect. The same routines should be agreed by parents and followed at both homes if applicable
2. Find and use quality child care and make sure that the same routines, expectations etc are followed by your child's carer
3. Set limits and boundaries, for your child, yourself and if applicable, your co-parent
4. Don't feel guilty about what you can't change or control
5. Take care of yourself too. This is essential. You can't pour from an empty jug!
6. Gain support from others, both parents extended families and friends
7. Stay positive and talk to others who understand
8. Keep dad/other parent involved
9. Many couples find that the easiest option can be for mum/one parent to take over most or all of the parenting role and for dad/other parent to drift into the background, the message here is – 'work as a team', which will make things a lot easier, and make sure you spend time together, if possible
10. Use support from relevant organisations, groups and the Solihull Parenting Team! Not all available support will suit everyone, so find the ones that work for you

For more information about any of the above parenting support available, please contact the Parenting Team via our Facebook page, or by email to bsmhft.parenting@nhs.net

Weekly parenting themed tweets can be viewed on our Facebook page, Solihull Parenting Team, or via the school nurse twitter feed: @SolSchNurses