



Cedarwood School

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BEING WITH

Our children and families often rely on their parents, caregivers, or teachers to provide them with a safe space – somewhere to go when things feel too difficult to manage. But what do you do when you're in the same boat? When you can't make things ok for your child or a pupil in your class because you are also experiencing the range of feelings your they are feeling? The best thing to do? **Be with.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'BE WITH'?

Being with your child's feelings means tuning into their needs, trying to see where they are coming from and understand from their perspective instead of letting your 'stuff' get in the way. It means allowing your child to feel something and relay this feeling to you, knowing they have your acceptance and that you won't tell them not to feel that way. Acknowledge the importance of their feelings.

KEEP YOURSELF IN CHECK

'Being with' means being the wiser adult – the combined effort of a kind but strong parent. Being with means to tolerate your child or teen's feelings, and sit with them, without dismissing them as unnecessary or too much. It means allowing your child to go and explore their world but knowing when they need to come back and have their cup filled by you.

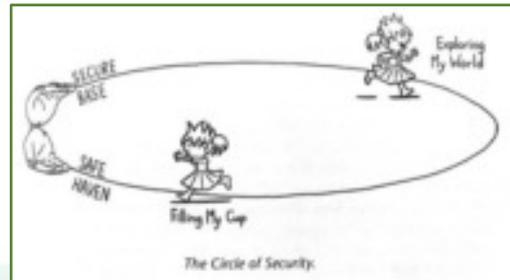
WHEN TO 'BE WITH'

Children won't tell you that they've had a bad day, but they'll ask you to play with them, read them a story, or for you to lie with them while they go to sleep. Your teens won't tell you either – but they might spend more time in their rooms, or they might become more needy of your time or pick a fight with you or one of their siblings. When children in our classes are having a tough time, they forget to do homework, rush their work, or sleep in class. When no words are spoken, we need to find other ways to access those we care about.



TOLERATING UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS

Sometimes we must just let our child experience feelings where we cannot help or make things better. Distractions, jokes, or 'it will be ok' are not sufficient in these situations and we must allow sadness, worry or anger to be felt. Just like [Bing Bong needed Sadness to sit with him, instead of Joy to tickle him and throw positivity his way](#), our children need us to sit with their feelings with them too, even if it's uncomfortable for us. Often just being heard is enough.



HOW TO NAVIGATE A TROUBLED TEENAGER ([From Circle of Security International](#))

1. Find ways to invite your teen into a conversation when you feel they're having a tough time. Take note of the unfamiliar that lets you know something is up. Ask questions and wonder with them about how they're feeling – don't lecture or tell them you know how they feel. **Listen.**
2. **Take charge** when you see your child is not managing on their own. Be the stronger and kinder adult by setting boundaries to protect your child.
3. **Reflect** on your interactions with your child and seek ways to improve where you can. Reflection means to look at an interaction with objectivity and perspective. If you realise you could have handled a situation with your child differently, tell them.

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH DIFFICULT FEELINGS

1. Take note of changes in behaviour and link those to your child's feelings. Bear in mind that some feelings that you might consider trivial are big and real feelings at their age. Respond with empathy.
2. Normalise their feelings. Let them know you are there for them. If you're sad too, tell them – you don't always have to be strong.
3. Make time to talk to your child or play with them when they ask.
4. Encourage creativity and mindfulness to express uncomfortable feelings.
5. Don't aim to fix, aim to listen, and validate.

