

# Good Responding Challenges and Solutions



**Resilient Parenting**

FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES

Below are solutions to some potential challenges that can come up around good listening and responding.

## Challenge:

Feeling unsure about how to help my child with problems

## Solutions:

- » Instead of trying to figure out a solution to the problem, let your child talk about it and use Conversation Starters and Say More's to encourage your child to tell you about it
- » Use self-talk like, "I don't always need to solve the problem. Listening will help my child feel better"
- » If your child is upset and you feel pressure to fix it, use a feeling response instead and check if you understand your child's feelings
- » If you feel like saying the problem is not a big deal, remind yourself that it may feel like a big deal to your child. Stop and think before you respond. Use your Four Talk to Me's to find out more information

## Challenge:

Avoiding the quick fix when my child tells me a problem

## Solutions:

- » Instead of jumping in with advice, let your child talk and use Conversation Starters and Say More's to encourage your child to tell you about it
- » If you feel like saying the problem is not a big deal, remind yourself that it may feel like a big deal to your child. Stop and think before you respond. Use your Four Talk to Me's to find out more information
- » If your child is upset and you want to fix things, use a feeling response instead and check if you understand your child's feelings
- » Use self-talk like, "I don't always need to solve the problem. Listening will help my child feel better"

## Challenge:

Forgetting to use good listening when talking with my child

## Solutions:

- » Print the Good Responding tip sheet or a picture of a big ear and put it somewhere you will see it every day. Or leave a sticky note reminder somewhere you will see it
- » Set a repeating alarm on your phone to remind you once a day to use Good Listening

## Challenge:

Feeling overwhelmed or uncomfortable with my child showing strong emotions

## Solutions:

- » Remind yourself that if your child is not allowed to talk about feelings, the feelings will probably come out in other ways (e.g., acting out, whining)
- » Use a feeling response and check if you understand your child's feelings
- » Remind yourself that your child will be better able to understand and deal with feelings if you let your child talk through them
- » If you are having trouble staying calm in the situation, use gentle postponing to give yourself some time to calm down. Restart the conversation once you're calm
- » Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself. You can also use self-talk to calm yourself, like, "It's okay if my child is upset. Just stay calm and listen"



**MODULE 4: Respond to Your Children so They Feel Understood**

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## Challenge:

Child not wanting to talk or giving one-word answers

## Solutions:

- » Remind yourself that this is new for your child too. It takes time for children to open up. Give yourself credit for using Good Listening tools, even if your child does not say much
- » Timing can be everything! Start a conversation during the time of day when your child tends to be the most talkative, for example, at bedtime
- » Explore times that have worked in the past – when was the last time you had a long conversation with your child?
- » Make sure you are using conversation starters like “Tell me about...” and questions that start with “What...”
- » Wait for your child to start talking to you. When this happens, stop what you are doing and focus on using Good Listening tools
- » Keep using Good Listening tools even if your child does not say much. Your child will still know that you care, that they can talk to you, and that you are interested in what is going on in their life

## Challenge:

Afraid child might say something I don't want to hear

## Solutions:

- » Remind yourself that Good Listening will help your child feel better about the situation
- » If your child is upset, use a Feeling Response and check if you understand your child's feelings
- » If you start to get upset, take a few deep breaths to calm yourself down. You can use self-talk like, “I can handle whatever my child has to say. Just stay calm and listen”
- » If you are having trouble staying calm in the situation, use gentle postponing to give yourself some time to calm down. Restart the conversation once you are calm

## Challenge:

Not wanting to create weak children or children who see parents as friends

## Solutions:

- » Talking about feelings takes strength and courage. It is the opposite of weak
- » Remind yourself that if your child is not allowed to talk about feelings, the feelings will probably come out in other ways (e.g., acting out, whining)
- » Remind yourself that your child will be better able to deal with feelings if you let your child talk about them. Dealing with feelings starts with understanding them
- » If you feel like saying the problem is not a big deal, remind yourself that it may feel like a big deal to your child. Stop and think before you respond. Use your Four Talk to Me's to find out more information
- » Remind yourself that boys need to talk about feelings too
- » Tell yourself that just because you are listening to your child does not mean that your child is in charge. You are using your authority to let them know that it is ok to talk about things

