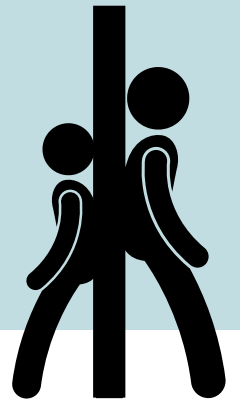




BLOCKED CARE



What is blocked care?

Blocked care (also known as compassion fatigue) is when a parent, following repeated rejected attempts to support their child, becomes emotionally unavailable. The parent can still meet the child's physical needs, however their ability to be attuned and empathetic decreases dramatically. In other words, a parent can become stressed when their attempts to parent their child (who are usually in blocked trust) are continually rejected. If you are in a state of blocked care with your child you might notice that it is hard to attune, connect and respond to your child.

Blocked care can develop in several ways:

- 1. Chronic blocked care:** This typically happens when a parent experienced a difficult childhood and therefore did not learn how to emotionally connect with others, including their child. This results in longstanding difficulties with being emotionally connected.
- 2. Acute blocked care:** This can occur when the parent or caregiver is going through a time of intense stress that they are finding difficult to cope with. This can lead to temporary difficulties in connecting emotionally.
- 3. Child specific blocked care:** This is when a specific child does not respond in the ways that the parent/caregiver is expecting, particularly when the child is not reciprocating the parents attempt at a relationship. It can also occur if the child reminds the adult of someone in their past that they had a difficult relationship with. Other children in the family do not illicit the same feelings and responses.
- 4. Stage specific blocked care:** There may be specific stages of child development that may be more challenging for an adult e.g. teenage years.

If you notice that you are struggling to connect emotionally with your child there are things you can do. Consider the following things:

- **Self-care** – It is really important for you to take care of yourself. If your needs are not being met, then it is difficult to be emotionally available and meet the needs of others. Think about exercising, mindfulness, going for walks etc. (go to self-care resource for more ideas).
- **Support** – Friends and family can help you to see the best in yourself and remind you of your strengths. It is important to have someone who can comfort you when times are difficult. Using professional support networks, e.g. parent groups, are also helpful for developing a sense of worth as a parent and to provide support around understanding your child.
- **Recognise your own history and triggers** – If you have difficulties from your past that impact on your feelings and ways of interacting with others it may be that therapy is something you may need to help explore your past. Therapy could help you identify experiences and triggers that affect you now. It might also offer you a space to ensure your emotional needs are being met, which then allows you to meet the emotional needs of your child.
- **Use PACE** – Try to remain in an open engaged stance with your child. It is important to avoid going in to a defensive, self-protective mode.
- **Enjoy the positive moments** – Celebrate the small victories! These small things can promote feelings of safety and love for both you and your child. By focusing on these small events you can hopefully spot the small changes that are occurring, which in the long run can reduce blocked care.

