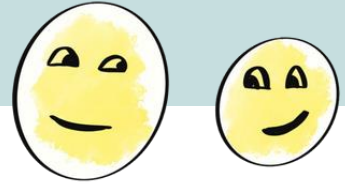


# A PACE-FUL APPROACH TO COVID-19

## FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN AND TEENS



### What is PACE?

**P**layfulness  
**A**cceptance  
**C**uriosity  
**E**mpathy

Developed by Dr. Hughes.

PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe. It is communicating using these elements together flexibly, not as a step by step process. PACE focuses on the whole child, not just the behaviour.

"So it's a small 'p' and a capital 'A' 'C' 'E' because I always am accepting, curious and empathic. Sometimes I'm not able to be playful. If I can be playful great, but if I can't I throw it away."

- Dr. Dan Hughes

For more information visit the DDP Network website (<https://ddpnetwork.org/>) and search for PACE



Here are our tips and advice for using a PACE-ful approach when talking to children and teens about COVID-19 and the current government guidelines.

**Be honest and factual**  
Keep it simple and age appropriate.  
Think about your sources of information, are they reliable or unreliable? Consider where your child or teen is getting their information from. Websites from Public Health Wales or WHO are the most reliable.



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Caerdydd a'r Fro  
Cardiff and Vale  
University Health Board

Resilience  
Project  
Prosiect  
Gwydnwch



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# PLAYFULNESS

is **NOT** about being funny or making jokes all the time but having fun and being playful when it feels right. **It is** about expressing...

Pleasure

JOY

← hope →

FUN

By using a light tone in your voice like you would when reading a story to a child



And setting time aside for playfulness

Playing games together

Doing things that make you both laugh

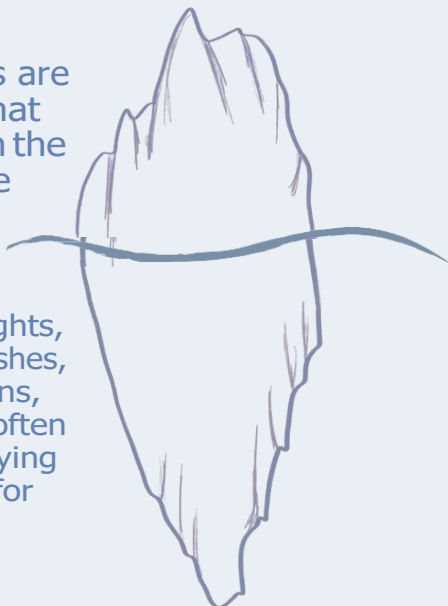
Adding an element of fun to everyday tasks

## ACCEPTANCE

is **NOT** about accepting harmful behaviour, boundaries around behaviour are still very important and safety should always be prioritised. **It is** about accepting the child or teen's inner experience. Including their; thoughts, wishes, needs, feelings and motivations.

Their behaviours are often what you see on the surface

Their thoughts, feelings, wishes, motivations, needs are often the underlying reasons for



behaviour

"I want to go to nanny's house"

"It's just so lonely being stuck inside"



"I know  
you're  
really  
missing  
your

nanny  
and  
grampy  
terribly"

"It's so hard not being able  
to see your friends. I know  
how much you miss them"



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# CURIOSITY

is **NOT** about being judgemental, anticipating a response, or directly asking "Why did you...?" **It is** wondering about the reasons behind the behaviour which often leads to a better understanding.



What do you think their behaviour was about?  
What do you think is going on for them?

Are they...

Do they ...

Bored?

Missing friends and Family?

Miss their school teacher and classmates?

**Feeling  
helpless?**

Worrying about what happens after this is over?

Need some time to play?

**Wish life was  
normal again?**

Frightened about the news?

Need a break or some space?

Once you have a best guess as to what lies beneath the surface for your child or teen, wonder aloud...

"Ugh, science is so rubbish"

"I've noticed you seem a little frustrated today, I'm wondering if there's something about this work that's bothering you"

"I'm so bored of facetime!"

"I bet it's not the same video calling your friends, I imagine you just want to see them in real life and give them a hug"

"I don't want to go back to school"

"I wonder if you're feeling a bit scared or worried about what's going to happen. The news can be frightening can't it"

And if we get it wrong, that's okay too

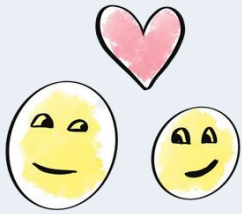


"I think I got it wrong earlier. Would you help me to understand what's going on for you?"



# EMPATHY

is about actively showing that you understand and have compassion for your child or teen's experience. It is standing in their shoes and staying with them throughout their emotional experience.



Empathy  
drives  
connection

"I just really miss  
everyone"

"It's so hard when we can't see our  
friends and family when we love  
them so much. It must be so  
painful that you can't just give  
them a hug"

It is also important to have  
empathy and compassion  
towards yourself in these  
difficult times too

"I'm so bored and fed  
up of it all"

"I can understand that...  
I think I'm starting to see how  
frustrating and unfair this all feels  
for you"

To see our video on self-care for  
parents/carers, search for 'Cardiff  
and Vale Resilience Project' on  
Youtube

"I guess I just feel  
a little sad some  
days"

"Thank you for telling me how you're  
feeling. I know it can be hard to talk  
about how we feel sometimes"



For more on empathy check  
out 'Brené Brown on  
Empathy' on Youtube



## TOP TIPS



Playfulness

Use a light tone of voice

Acceptance

Accept the child or young person's feelings or emotions,  
but not harmful behaviour

Curiosity

Wonder about what's beneath the behaviour

Empathy

Show the child that their experience is important to you

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

