



MENTAL HEALTH

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Raising Compassionate Kids

When you hear the term “mental health,” what do you think of? Raising emotionally healthy children and teens is not just about preventing or treating illness. It is a positive goal—to give children and teens the emotional tools so they can cope and enjoy life to the fullest. One “tool” to help build mental health and emotional wellbeing is compassion. How do you teach a child to be compassionate?

Compassion—Caring For and About Others

According to Psychology Today, teaching compassion involves opportunities to observe and experience it:

- You are a role model. When you show compassion to another person in need your child is watching and learning.
- Let your child be on the receiving end of compassion. When your child is hurt or upset, the tender loving care you show lets your child see again how it is done, and also learns how good it feels to receive that kind of care.
- Look for examples of compassion in movies, and TV shows—and

talk about it with your child. That shows that you value compassion.

To read more about ways to teach compassion, go to: www.psychologytoday.com/blog/passive-aggressive-diaries/201111/teaching-compassion-kids

Read a Book, Learn a Lesson in Compassion

Children's books are great sources to learn about compassion. Stories can show kids how to react and interact in positive ways with people who are different. A blog entry from the “Pragmatic Mom” lists her top 10 books for ages 2-14 that teach compassion through stories about making friends with autistic children, homeless people, bullying, and others. Go to: www.pragmaticmom.com/?p=4481.

