mindhealth FACT SHEET

WHEN THE LOAD OUTGROWS THE DAY

Parenting stress

The impossible job, done tired. Good news: children never needed perfect.



Good enough
Warm, present, repairing

Your tank
Kids borrow your calm

Repair
Rupture + repair builds trust

01 The pressure nobody escapes

Parenting stress is near-universal: relentless logistics, broken sleep, big feelings (theirs and yours), and a running commentary implying everyone else is doing it better. They aren't. Feeling stretched, bored or desperate for an hour alone doesn't make you a bad parent. It makes you human, doing the most demanding job there is, tired.

02 Good enough is what works

Decades of family research lands somewhere freeing: children thrive with a "good enough" parent: warm, responsive enough of the time, and willing to repair after rough moments. "I'm sorry I yelled, let's try again" doesn't undo the wobble; it teaches your child how repair works. Your calm is the family thermostat, which makes minding your own tank part of the job, not a luxury.

03 What genuinely helps

- Lowering the bar on the non-essentials
- Repairing after a snap, briefly and honestly
- Micro-breaks before the tank hits empty
- Sharing the load, and actually asking
- One regular thing that's yours alone

A PRACTICAL STORY



THE STANDARD

Good enough is great



THE GREEN RING
- warm, most of the time
- present, not perfect
- repairs after wobbles

THE BULLSEYE
"perfect": nobody lives there

good enough, repeated, builds security

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

The reset

1. Pause: one slow breath before responding
2. Shrink the next hour, not the week
3. Repair beats replaying the wobble

Slow it down, together.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If parenting stress has tipped into constant anger, anxiety or low mood, or you and your partner are running on fumes, support helps. Talk to your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan.

DID YOU KNOW?

The idea of the good enough parent comes from paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, who wrote about the good enough mother in the 1950s.

Winnicott, International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 1953

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

Your child doesn't need a perfect parent. They need you: resourced, repairing, and still in the game.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta and online, Australia-wide · **Book at mindhealth.com.au**

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