

NEWSLETTER

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parenting with
JOY

DECEMBER
2022

Here's an idea to think about for a while: joy and stress cannot co-exist. Because stress takes over our brain and body, it leaves no room for joy. Joy requires the ability to take in what is around us and within us, and reflect on our gratitude, and truly experience the moment. In these six weeks or so, a lot of events happen at school, in our community, and maybe in your family. There are ceremonies and parties, perhaps travel, and the pressure of purchases to make.

If you are immensely stressed about the non-important aspects of the holidays, it is unlikely that you will experience joy. This holiday season, try to let go of the unimportant things to leave more space for joy. If you are in a particularly challenging season of grief or loss or sadness, know that joy can come in between the moments of grief. Allow joy to seep through the windows of time between bouts of sadness and grief.

Questions for parents to consider:

- How can I intentionally experience increased joy with less stress this holiday?
- What brings joy to me and my family?
- What might rob me of joy?

Questions to ask your child:

- What is the best part of the celebrations this month for you?
- What do you think joy means?
- When have you ever seen me be joyful?

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JOY:

Finding a way to be happy, even when things don't go your way

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Week One:

What does true joy look like? How does that compare to happiness? It's not always easy to answer, especially when you find yourself facing some dark times. This month, though, we will take some time to explore the difference between what happiness is and what true joy might feel like. It's been mentioned recently that a "fake it til you make it" approach to happiness might not be the best way to get it done. So how can we find joy while being real, and allowing ourselves to feel other emotions as well?

MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS

Week Two:

"Finding" joy is an active, thought-selecting process. Looking for joy instead of waiting for the next shoe to drop is one choice we have when facing things that aren't going our way. This week, we will examine how you are evaluating and labeling things in your everyday life. We'll discuss how we can choose to see more positives — even if it takes time for us to reflect throughout our day.

Week Three:

What do you do when you can't find joy? Joy during the holidays may be easier for some and harder for others. If it's easier for you now, how can you maintain that throughout the year? If it is harder for you now, how could this year be just a little bit better?