

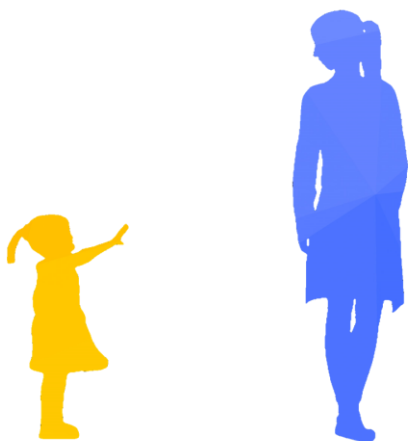
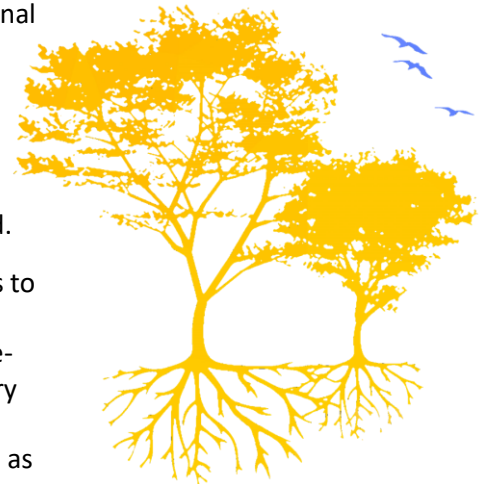
# Emotional Well-Being of Children

Research findings for mothers (Bourke-Taylor PhD©)



This fact sheet reports on research findings that identified the emotional well-being of a child as a major contributor to maternal stress (Bourke-Taylor, 2019). Parents share a unique bond with their children. The relationship between a parent and a child requiring additional care may be different. Research with mothers suggests that providing care and additional assistance in daily activities, as well as the child's health issues, all combine to create an intense bond.

Many mothers may find that a close relationship with their child helps to maintain a good routine and good care. It can be difficult to find the balance between providing enough care and attention and feeling pre-occupied with a child's care needs. Some mothers describe feeling very connected to their child's experiences and feelings. Consequently, mothers say that they experience similar emotions to their child, such as worry and sadness, and it can be challenging to separate from these feelings.



## *Is there a downside to experiencing similar emotions to my child?*

Strong connections with your children can support your emotional well-being. However, some mothers say that they overshare their child's emotions and reactions. Empathising is an important skill. Learning to understand what may help your child feel or participate better is a goal for most parents. Empathising is different to feeling what your child is feeling. Emphasising promotes better understanding of your child and keeps your own feelings separated.

Experiencing the same feelings as your child can make stepping back and empathising difficult. Separating your feelings from those of your child may help to keep perspective on situations, lead to better decision-making, and protect your emotional well-being.

## *So what can I do?*

Recognising that you respond strongly to your child's emotional experiences is an important step in learning how to manage your own reactions.

Mothering is a wonderful role that is not always easy. It can be hard to both care for your child and maintain the ability to take a step back and focus on yourself and other aspects of your life.

Make time to take a break to replenish yourself.

'[I felt] fused with my child's emotions and issues. It was something that I was unaware that I was even doing ... but becoming aware of that has actually freed me up a little bit with my own emotional well-being.'

**It is important to manage your own emotional well-being.  
Anything that you do for your own well-being will also positively impact your child's well-being.**

Visit our website at <http://www.healthymothers-healthyfamilies.com/> for references and more information.

If this fact sheet has raised any concerns, please seek medical advice from your local GP. Alternatively, please call LifeLine on 13 11 14 or Carers Australia, who can provide short-term counselling and emotional support for carers and families, on 1800 242 636.