Reject the Busyness: Build Parent-Child Relationships Every Day

Parents should first handle their own emotions to help their children express their inner feelings.

Whether parents are working or full-time homemakers, they are busy every day with work, household chores, and taking care of their children. After school, children are also busy with homework, tutoring, and reviewing for exams. Leisure time is limited, and bedtime comes early. Dr. Wong Chung Hin, a specialist in psychiatry, points out, "Parents and students in Hong Kong are very busy, but we need to learn to 'preprocess' emotions or stress before they erupt, and establish a good parent-child relationship. Parents should set aside dedicated parent-child time every day to communicate with their children. Parents should also take care of their own emotions, which will help their children express their inner feelings."

In the midst of busy daily life, parents need to take good care of themselves first in order to better care for their children. Dr. Wong suggests, "Rather than dealing with emotional problems after they arise, 'preprocessing' is more important. Parents can establish healthy habits with their children, ensuring they have sufficient rest. Many students have tutoring and homework to do after school, but a moderate amount of entertainment is also crucial. As mentioned earlier, daily parent-child communication time is necessary. Doing fun activities together, such as exercising, not only builds quality parent-child time but also improves emotions."

Dr. Wong emphasizes, "Parents should review their disciplinary expectations, adjust disciplinary methods according to their children's abilities to avoid putting too much pressure on them. Parents need to understand that every child will grow up, want to

be independent, and have their own thoughts. Parents can understand the reasons behind their children's behavior, such as not wanting to go to school or declining academic performance. Parents should investigate whether the underlying cause is excessive learning pressure and communicate with the school to make adjustments to their child's learning."

In fact, children's emotions can be influenced by the emotions of their parents. Dr. Wong explains, "When children have emotional issues, it may be partly influenced by family history. However, in many cases, children with emotional problems have parents with poorer emotional well-being. Parents should always be aware of their own emotional states to avoid expressing emotions inappropriately. For example, when parents are dissatisfied with their children's behavior, they may burst out in anger, which not only affects the parent-child relationship, making the child at a loss and afraid to communicate with their parents, but also influences the parents' own perceptions, negatively characterizing the child's behavior as 'disobedient,' 'pretending,' and lazy."

Parents most commonly face the situation of children "not listening at all" and may find it hard to refrain from getting angry. However, Dr. Wong reminds, "During these times, parents should not confront their children directly. Instead, they can find a space to calm themselves, for example, by doing some slow breathing exercises to soothe their emotions. Once the parent has calmed down, they can then address the child and understand the underlying reasons for the child's behavior. If parents cannot control their emotions, it will only complicate things and make it difficult to have a chance to communicate with their children."

Dr. Wong suggests, "Everyone has a different personality, and the methods for handling stress also vary. Parents can work together with their children to establish stress management methods, whether it's through exercise, drawing, listening to music, taking a good rest, or simply relaxing. However, when parents notice that their child's emotional issues have persisted for a prolonged period, or have started to affect daily life, and especially if there are signs of self-harm or suicidal thoughts, parents should seek professional assistance for their children as soon as possible."

Dr. Wong concludes with a message to parents: "Many parents are currently juggling work commitments, but it's important for parents to consider setting aside a moment each day, putting work aside, and dedicating time to their children to build a strong parent-child relationship and enjoy quality time together. This way, parents can also pay attention to any changes in their children's mental and emotional well-being, detect problems early, and prevent the development of emotional issues such as depression or anxiety."