

TIPS FOR SEPARATING & SEPARATED PARENTS



Separation can be a difficult time for families for many reasons. It takes time to adjust & adapt. Decisions about the future can be challenging when our emotions are fragile. Coping as an adult may feel like swimming in treacle at this time & then there are your children's emotions to consider.

Children need a life jacket to keep their heads above water & enable them to see that the safe shore landing is near & they will arrive there with some support.

There are many ways of helping children through this transitional period & we would like to share some with you that may help with communication between parents & your children.

“I don't know what to say, it's the other parent's fault...”

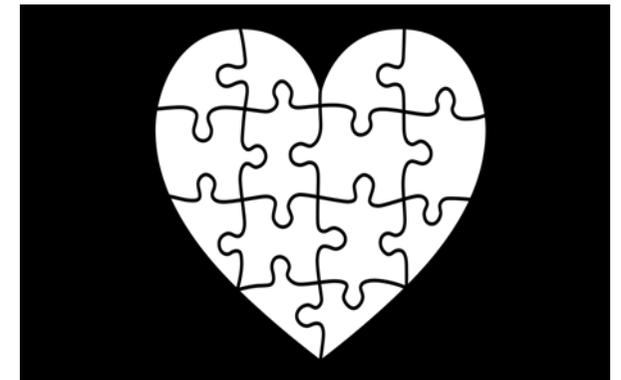
Children look to you as their role models so often, how you handle challenges in life, is how they will respond when things are difficult for them. Hearing negative comments or placing blame on the other parent is very difficult for a child no matter what their age. This is because they are made up from both of you. Often in a child's mind they think, 'if you don't like that part of that parent, then you don't like/love that part of me.' This can have a negative impact on their self-esteem & knock their confidence in the present time & Future.

“The kids don't know yet, how can we ever tell them?”

Children need to know what is happening & how this will affect them. They do not need adult information, but need to understand that changes may be happening & both parents are working together to make sure everyone is happy. It's important to tell your child that even though you, as parents, are choosing not to live together, you both still love them & that love will never change.

“I just can't be around the other parent. I am so upset and angry”

Not arguing or fighting in front of the children is challenging however, what your child/ren see & hear now stays with them for the rest of their lives.





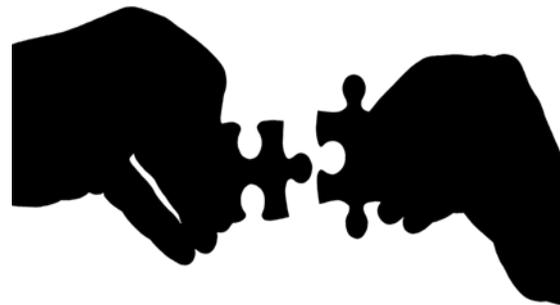
“I want to be honest with my children so I will tell them what is happening and why?”

Be careful with the information you provide your children. Ask yourself the question, ‘What will my telling them this information achieve?’

Will the information I’m telling them help them? Does it make them hate the other parent? Does it make them more likely to side with you? Children in most cases feel they have to choose between their parents and this type of pressure is really unhealthy to them. They will feel a need to protect either parent & will often say what they think the particular parent needs to hear.

“So what do I do...?”

You are only human & you have emotions. There is nothing wrong with talking about those emotions as children have them too. It may be helpful to talk to your child/ren about how you are feeling, but what is really important, is that you both try, as much as possible, to be the best parents you can be for your children.



Programmes, counselling & support for separated or separating parent are offered by 'Relate'

Relate is a registered charity & has staff that support helping you move forward. They offer a programme called ‘Parents Apart’

Contact: office@relate-bournemouth.org.uk or call 01202 311231 to book a course or for further info www.relate-bournemouth.org.uk

Further guidance and support is available from caf cass at www.cafcass.gov.uk please follow link to ‘Separated Parents Information Programme pdf.

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parents-and-carers/divorce-and-separation/separated-parents-information-programme/>

This resource has been devised by partners in the Christchurch Family Partnership Zone.