

ALI 262: The Essentials of Positive Parenting

A four week online course

Sponsored by

The Academy for Learning Islam

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Review of course objectives

- The paradigm of positive parenting
- Encouraging desirable behaviour
- Setting limits and managing undesirable behaviour
- Building positive relationships
- Taking care of ourselves as parents

Review from Week 3

- Managing undesirable behaviour, cont.
- Discipline Strategies
 - Natural and logical consequences
 - Time outs
 - 6-step process for encouraging cooperation

Agenda for Week 4

- Basics of relationship building with children
 - Communication 101
- Looking after ourselves as parents
 - Understanding, recognizing and managing stress
 - Working as a team and dealing with parental disagreements

Importance of building positive relationships

- The foundation for emotional and psychological wellbeing for children
- Our greatest leverage (in terms of values) with them as they grow

Communication 101

- Do make the time (no multitasking or pretend listening)
- Do listen to the little stuff
- Do listen to the feeling behind the words
- Do listen to understand rather than to reply
- Do ask their opinion
- Do learn to ask the right questions
- Don't interrupt, don't be quick to fix
- Don't interview
- BREATHE!!!

Towards more effective communication

One of the simplest (but not necessarily the easiest) ways to being effective communicators is by breathing (also known as biting our tongues!) so that we DO NOT say the things that children (and adults) often experience as critical, embarrassing, demoralizing, confusing, de-motivating, belittling, discouraging or infuriating, nagging

Avoid door slammers

- You don't really mean that
- You should not feel that way
- That is a silly way to think
- Why are you asking me that
- You are too young to know
- Act your age
- You will be fine
- Don't be a baby

Door openers

- What do you think
- Would you like to share more about that
- That is a good question
- Hmm, how about that
- That sounds important to you
- That is an interesting way to look at it
- I would like to hear your point of view on this
- Tell me more
- Help me understand
- Sounds like you are feeling . . . Is that right?
- High/low

What are your concerns in trying the door openers?

What are your concerns in trying the door openers?

- What if I don't agree with their point of view?
- Is talking about something encouraging them to try something illegal, immoral or haram?
- It appears too contrived
- What if I don't know the answer to what they are asking
- It makes me uncomfortable
- What if I am also confused about something?

Concerns with door openers

- Listening to children and asking questions actually has the effect of:
 - Clarifying their confusions about values
 - It helps build moral intelligence in children
 - Builds a strong relationship of trust with the parent
 - STOPS them from engaging in risky behaviour

Children do best if we support them in
dealing with their feelings by accepting
feelings while limiting undesirable
actions

Taking care of ourselves as parents

- You cannot pour water from an empty jug
- Satisfied parents create an atmosphere of happiness
- Role modeling self care and wellness
- More likely to be proactive rather than reactive

Why is it important for parents to manage stress

- Parenting is a demanding job and can be stressful
- Caregivers who are stressed find it more difficult to offer praise, nurturance and the structure that young children need.
- Caregivers who are stressed are more likely to use harsh discipline.
- Children whose caregivers are under high stress tend to have more challenging behavior

Why is it important for parents to manage stress

- So stress impacts both you as a parent, your children and your family as a whole

Dealing with stress

- Understanding stress
- Recognizing own role in stress creation and reduction
- Building an action plan

What is stress

- A physical, mental or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension
- Comes from a situation or a thought that makes you feel frustrated, nervous, anxious or angry
- Can be a good thing
- Can also be harmful

Common Sources of Parent Stress

Conflict with child care provider/other family members

Too much to do and no time to keep up

Having no time for yourself

Too few additional caregivers

Environmental issues- noise, lack of space, disorganized, etc.

Children need things immediately

Personal concerns – family, financial, health, etc.

Having few/no opportunities for personal development

Lack of clear communication with family

Feeling like you have little control over your own decisions

Common Symptoms of Stress

Cognitive:	Emotional:
Memory problems Inability to concentrate Continuous worry Racing thoughts	Feeling Down Feeling overwhelmed Irritability (short temper) Inability to relax
Physical:	Behavioral:
Excessive Perspiration Chest pains/ elevated heart Frequent colds/illness Nausea, dizziness or headaches	Increase /decrease appetite Nervous habits Difficulty/irregular sleeping Excessive use of over the counter medications

Creating and reducing stress

- Role of thoughts
- Role of needing control
- Looking at the big picture

The Role of Control in Stress Reduction

What is in our control

- Our ability to prioritize work & personal obligations
- Our reactions to events and people
- Our thoughts
- Focusing on areas in your control results in:
 - Feeling empowered
 - Feeling relief

Out of our control

- Everything else!
- How people respond to us
- Other people's feelings
- Focusing on areas outside of our control results in:
 - Feeling hopeless
 - Feeling anxious
 - Feeling STRESSED

Action plan for managing stress

- Looking after body, mind, heart and soul

Instant stress relievers (what to do in a time out)

- Remove yourself from the situation
- Walk around the block
- Press your reset button
- Take a breath
- Give a hug/get a hug
- Sensory awareness/mindful observation in nature

Recognizing and dealing with stress (longer term stress management)

- Taking regular time outs for yourself
- Doing something good for yourself everyday
- Using salaah as time for yourself rather than a chore
- Prayer and meditation
- Avoid over scheduling yourself and your children
- Recognize the priorities

Working as a team

- In the ideal situation, both parents are on the same page
- Importance of consistency
 - Security
 - Cannot play one parent against another
 - Clear and identified rules

Working as a team

- Parents who have significantly different child-rearing styles are more likely to have children with behavior problems than families who have similar styles.
- (Research by Dr. James H. Bray at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston)

Working as a team – dealing with differences

- Pick your battles
 - Not everything is a big issue
 - Giving a little on the less important things will make it more likely you can stand ground on the big stuff
- Respond rather than react
- Use good communication skills – say what you want, not what you don't want
- Set a good example – focus on what YOU can do
- Appreciating differences - synergy
- Pray!

Dealing with parenting disagreements

- Keep the goal in mind
- Attend a class or read a book together
- Reflect on your role as ‘gatekeeper’
- Work on your self
- Prioritize your marital relationship

As we end . . .

- Keep hope alive
- It may take a while
 - The miracle of the Chinese bamboo tree
- The power of prayer
- Continuing the learning
- Feedback
 - What was helpful
 - How will you use it
 - Stories

Questions and Comments

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