



THERAPEUTIC PARENTING

A gentle, trauma-informed approach



WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC PARENTING?

Therapeutic parenting is a way of caring for children that focuses on understanding the meaning behind behaviour, rather than simply reacting to it.

It is particularly helpful for children who have experienced:

- ♥ Trauma
- ♥ Neglect
- ♥ Abuse
- ♥ Loss or separation
- ♥ Attachment disruption
- ♥ High levels of stress or anxiety

Instead of asking "What is wrong with this child?"

We ask instead, "What has happened to this child, and what might they need from me right now?"



WHY DOES IT WORK?

Children learn to regulate through relationships.

When a child feels emotionally safe with an adult:

- ♥ Their nervous system becomes calmer
- ♥ Their brain becomes more open to learning
- ♥ Their sense of trust and connection grows
- ♥ They begin to feel understood rather than "bad"

Therapeutic parenting works because it focuses on:

- ♥ Connection before correction
- ♥ Co-regulation before self-regulation
- ♥ Curiosity instead of shame
- ♥ Safety instead of fear



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE DAY-TO-DAY

Therapeutic parenting does not mean:

- ✗ Allowing unsafe behaviour
- ✗ Having no boundaries
- ✗ "Giving in"
- ✗ Being permissive

Children still need clear boundaries and structure.

The difference is how adults respond.

Instead of punishment and shame, therapeutic parenting uses:

- ♥ Calmness
- ♥ Empathy
- ♥ Curiosity
- ♥ Connection
- ♥ Consistency



SIMPLE TIPS FOR EVERYDAY

1

CONNECT BEFORE CORRECT



When a child is dysregulated, they usually cannot learn from consequences or lectures in that moment.

Try:

- ♥ "I can see something feels really hard right now."
- ♥ "I'm here with you."
- ♥ "Let's calm first, then we can talk."

Children often need connection before they can access logic.

2

STAY CALM (EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD)



Children "borrow" the nervous system of the adult around them.

If we become highly angry, anxious, or reactive, their distress often increases too.

Helpful strategies:

- ♥ Lower your voice
- ♥ Slow your pace
- ♥ Pause before reacting
- ♥ Use fewer words

3

BE CURIOUS ABOUT BEHAVIOUR



Behaviour is communication.

Instead of:

"They're just attention seeking."

Try wondering:

- ♥ Are they feeling unsafe?
- ♥ Are they overwhelmed?
- ♥ Are they anxious about connection?
- ♥ Are they struggling with shame?
- ♥ Is this behaviour protecting them somehow?

Curiosity helps us respond more effectively.

4

USE HIGH STRUCTURE + HIGH NURTURE



Children impacted by trauma often need:

- ♥ Predictability
- ♥ Routine
- ♥ Clear boundaries
- ♥ Reassurance
- ♥ Emotional warmth

This balance matters.

Too much control without connection can increase shame and fear.

Too little structure can feel unsafe and overwhelming.

5

REPAIR MATTERS MORE THAN PERFECTION



No parent gets it right all the time.

Therapeutic parenting is not about being perfect.

It is about repairing after difficult moments.

Simple repair might sound like:

- ♥ "I'm sorry I shouted earlier."
- ♥ "We both had a hard moment."
- ♥ "I still care about you."
- ♥ "Let's start again."

Repair teaches children that relationships can survive difficult feelings.



A final reminder

Children who have experienced trauma are not "giving adults a hard time." More often, they are having a hard time.

Therapeutic parenting helps children feel:

- ♥ Safe
- ♥ Seen
- ♥ Understood
- ♥ Connected

And from that place, growth becomes possible.

