

A FREE  
MAGAZINE

# THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

MAY 2024  
VOLUME 26 ISSUE 05

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*Boss*  
24/7!

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PREGNANCY - BABY - TODDLER & PRESCHOOL - SCHOOL AGE - FAMILY



# Summer Dance Fun for Little Ones

LEARN, GROW, HAVE FUN, & STAY HEALTHY THIS SUMMER

Summer's just around the corner, and it's the perfect season for your little adventurers to try something new and exciting—dance! With the warm weather inviting all sorts of fun, dance classes offer a fantastic blend of indoor activity, creativity, and movement.

Why dance this summer? Class sessions are short and sweet, designed to fit the summer vibe. They're just long enough for your kiddos to get a taste of dancing fun without a lengthy commitment. It's the perfect way to introduce them to the rhythm and joy of movement.

We all know summer weather can be unpredictable. On those too-hot or rainy days, dance provides a perfect, weather-proof option for staying active. Plus, flexible scheduling works around your summer plans, allowing you to sign up week by week. No stress, just fun!

Dance isn't just about moving; it's a holistic activity that boosts physical fitness, creativity, and social skills. It's an opportunity for your child to express themselves, build confidence, and make new friends.

Our programs are crafted with little ones in mind, offering a variety of dance styles in a welcoming, kid-friendly environment. This summer, let's create unforgettable memories on the dance floor. It's time to dance our way through the sunny days and make this summer truly magical for your children!

REGISTER NOW AT DANCE EXTREME

*Let's Dance!*



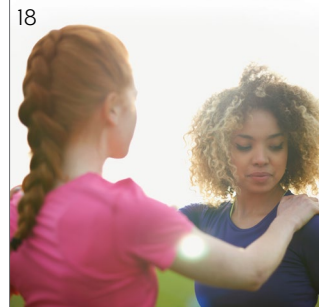
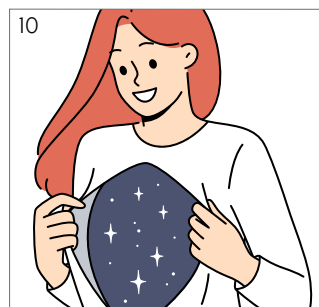
**Dance extreme**

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## ON THE COVER

*Nova* was making a whole day of it with mom and dad - after her photo shoot she requested lunch at *The Pickle Barrel*. We think she deserved it - mom teased her hair with spray to give it that "morning" look, so brushing the tangles out afterwards may have been a chore!

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# SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH

Here's where I'm at in my life this Mother's Day. My son is unbelievably grown and proudly heading off to university soon. I was starting to have all the freedom in the world, when I decided to get a puppy. My dog, Coco, turns one year old this month, and I'm experiencing a toddler all over again.

Happy Mother's Day to everyone out there who plays a mothering role! You have one of the toughest, most-rewarding, tear-shedding, smile-inducing jobs in this world. One of my favourite topics at Mother's Day (and every day of the year) is self-care. You may find it selfish to put yourself first. Why spend time on my body, mind and well-being when I have children and other family members and friends for which to care?

Well, I'm here to remind you of the reason that usually gets mamas listening. Just as flight attendants explain when they're talking about oxygen masks, you can't take care of another person if you haven't first taken care of yourself! If you're in a negative cycle of putting others before yourself, it's time to break it. Basic self-care is made up of the following components:

**1 NUTRITION** - A healthy, balanced diet is crucial for your body and brain. I know it's easier said than done, but prepare simple healthy meals, eat slowly and with intention.

**2 SLEEP** - This one is incredibly difficult for new parents, but get help if you need it. A lack of sleep decreases brain function and leads to health concerns like heart disease, obesity, depression and diabetes.

**3 MOVEMENT** - Focus on just 10 minutes of physical activity a day to start. Exercise is also a great stress buster.

**4 STRESS REDUCTION** - Engage in rest and relaxation habits like meditation, yoga or focused deep breathing.

**5 JOY** - Spend some time with yourself and find something that you love to do. This could be gardening, bowling, singing to the radio or reading *The Mom & Caregiver*. Don't let your mind wander to worries!

**6 HEALTH CARE** - Be proactive and preventative. Do NOT skip appointments. Advocate for yourself.

Self-care is never selfish, ladies! So let's start taking care of ourselves - the benefits will be well worth it.

*With gratitude,*

*Sabrina*

PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR



For More Details and Events Visit

THE MOM & CAREGIVER .COM  
Your Online Parenting Resource





# EVENTS

M A Y 2 0 2 4

America's Top Psychic Medium: **01<sup>ST</sup>**  
Matt Fraser, Centennial Hall,  
[www.centennialhall.london.ca](http://www.centennialhall.london.ca)

**04<sup>TH</sup>** Spring Weekend Market, Upstairs  
Mezzanine Covent Garden Market,  
[www.coventmarket.com](http://www.coventmarket.com)

Stars on Ice, Budweiser Gardens, **05<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.budweisergardens.com](http://www.budweisergardens.com)

**07<sup>TH</sup>** Ice Cube: Straight Into Canada Tour,  
Budweiser Gardens,  
[www.budweisergardens.com](http://www.budweisergardens.com)

Mother's Day Paint and Bottomless  
Mimosas, London Courtyard Venue, **11<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.eventbrite.ca](http://www.eventbrite.ca)

**12<sup>TH</sup>** Happy  
Mother's Day!

Mother's Day Botanical Market,  
Eldon House, **12<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.eldonhouse.ca](http://www.eldonhouse.ca)

**15<sup>TH</sup>** Jann Arden & Rick Mercer - *The Will They  
or Won't They* Tour, Centennial Hall,  
[www.centennialhall.london.ca](http://www.centennialhall.london.ca)

London Majors vs. Welland Jackfish,  
Labatt Memorial Park, **17<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.londonmajors.com](http://www.londonmajors.com)

**20<sup>TH</sup>** Happy  
Long weekend!

Victoria Day at the Village,  
Fanshawe Pioneer Village, **20<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.fanshawepioneervillage.ca](http://www.fanshawepioneervillage.ca)

**26<sup>TH</sup>** TRiKiDS Triathlon Series, Carling Heights  
Optimist Community Centre,  
[www.trikids.ca/events/london](http://www.trikids.ca/events/london)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour  
Dreamcoat, Paul Davenport Theatre, **31<sup>ST</sup>**  
[www.mavisproductions.ca](http://www.mavisproductions.ca)



**...IS HERE AND THE DAYS  
ARE GETTING SUNNIER!**

**Here are 12 great outdoor  
activities that will entertain  
kids for hours:**

- 1. Fly a kite**
- 2. Draw with sidewalk chalk**
- 3. Grab your rubber boots  
and play in puddles**
- 4. Dig in a sandbox**
- 5. Go on a bug hunt**
- 6. Throw a Frisbee**
- 7. Have a picnic**
- 8. Play hopscotch**
- 9. Have a backyard  
toy car wash**
- 10. Stack and balance rocks**
- 11. Find shapes in the clouds**
- 12. Make twirling ribbon  
sticks and play in the wind**



“ A mom is like a teabag. You can't tell how strong  
she is until you put her in hot water.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

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MOM & CAREGIVER

# HERE'S TO GREAT NUTRITION!

Eating is so much more than just food – it's a celebration of culture, tradition and health! Let's celebrate nutrition by enjoying food with family and friends. Cooking more often and eating meals with others can make a difference in our overall health and well-being.

*Here are some tips to nourish your body and soul:*

- Choose foods for enjoyment, culture, traditions, budget, health and celebrations.
- Enjoy a variety of foods, including those recommended by Canada's Food Guide.
- Include plant-based foods like tofu, beans, peas, pulses, nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruits.
- Listen to your body's hunger and fullness cues.
- Cook and share meals with loved ones often.

The 2024 Nutrition Month theme was "We are Dietitians". Dietitians are the trusted nutrition professionals that know that the

foundation of a well-balanced diet is to choose nutrient rich foods.

**DIETITIANS:**

- have the distinct ability to translate the complex science of nutrition into practical healthy eating solutions
- use their nutrition expertise to help individuals make positive lifestyle changes
- advocate for improving health through food and nutrition
- work throughout our community in public health, hospitals, health and wellness centres, food companies, universities and private practice

The easiest way to access a Registered Dietitian (RD) in Ontario is via Health 811.

Do you have digestive issues like constipation or bloating? Do you have diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis or food allergies? Or do you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, kidney and liver disease? For free nutrition information and advice, call Health 811 to

speaking with an RD. You can also chat virtually with an RD if you prefer. Translation services are available. Learn more: [www.healthconnectontario.health.gov.on.ca/static/guest/related-articles/hcns-nutrition-program](http://www.healthconnectontario.health.gov.on.ca/static/guest/related-articles/hcns-nutrition-program)

You may also ask your health care provider for a referral to an RD or check [www.healthunit.com/in-our-community](http://www.healthunit.com/in-our-community).



.....  
Ginette Blake, BSc RD and Alex Mahecha, Dietetic Practicum Student for the Middlesex-London Health Unit

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# THE EXTREME HIGHS AND LOWS OF MOTHERHOOD

Being a mother is arguably the hardest job in the world. From the time we get pregnant and hear the first heartbeat, to when our kids grow and leave the nest, we experience numerous highs and lows that continue to change who we are as women.

I was one of the lucky ones bestowed the honor of motherhood. After eight years of fertility treatment and many losses, we welcomed our perfect little boy. I have never felt such unconditional love in my life. It was majestic and outshone some of the incredible lows of motherhood. The grief of losing my "old self", sleep deprivation, drastic hormonal shifts, and the constant worry for my child's well-being was overwhelming and sadly not discussed in society as it should. There is this unspoken belief that when you chose to be a mother, you must just accept all the lows that can

come with motherhood. Motherhood at any point in time can be incredibly hard and needs to be acknowledged, and as a society we need to provide much-needed support.

The most difficult low of being a mother for me came shortly after we adopted our little boy, Hani. Our family was finally complete, and we all fell madly in love with each other. Even though we had lots of lows as Hani adjusted to his new life, we had many more highs. I loved him unconditionally from the moment I met him. Tragically, we lost our Hani due to medical negligence. There are no words to express the depths of despair when the natural order is disrupted, and your child dies before you. You are consumed by an endless agonizing longing for your child and a grief that follows you, ever changing as you change though the rest of your life. I hope that as we discuss more



openly the highs AND lows of motherhood, we will normalize it and thus better support each other while we navigate this amazing and challenging road.

To all mothers, I celebrate all that you give to your children this Mother's Day. To all grieving mothers, I know all too well that this day isn't easy to celebrate. Know that I see you, I hear you and feel your pain. Time and space cannot change the fact that you were, and always will be, their mother.

*Becky Morrison is a Nurse Practitioner based out of Calgary who has specialized in mental health for over a decade. She is finally, after years of infertility, a mother of two busy little boys, and doting fur mom of her gentle giant, Stella. She is, and always will be, a strong advocate for mental wellness at all ages.*

Come to a **London Majors** Baseball Game with your **Family!**

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Purchase tickets online at: [londonmajors.com](http://londonmajors.com)





# MAY SHOWERS AND DAD SUPERPOWERS

May. Spring. A sense of renewal. A break from being driven up the same four walls or going outside and risking frostbite. Make the most of our four and a half months of nice weather in Southwestern Ontario.

As Kevin Durant said a few years ago in accepting his NBA MVP award, moms “are the real MVP”, as his mom supported him to become the best basketball player in the world. But while moms are MVPs, dads are or can be superheroes.

Here are three things to do today to fill your metaphorical tights and cape, with something other than your dad bod, in starting your superhero origin story.

### 1. Build a Lex Luthor evil supervillain-sized nest egg

Saving and investing are accessible. \$50 per pay cheque per kid maximizes the

*Jeremy McCall is a married father of 3, a social services case manager, and known as “The Dadfather”; being the founder and Past President of Dad Club London.*

government grant in your kid's RESP, and a 20% guaranteed return on investment is huge. My kids save half their allowance, and I invest it into EFTs on Wealthsimple, which have averaged 18.2% for a year. Invested money grows and creates options, like taking over the world.

### 2. Become one with nature like Poison Ivy

London has incredible nature trails. The Thames Valley Parkway is excellent for walking, running or biking. Check out Warbler Woods or walk from Wonderland Gardens to Springbank Park for the wading pool and playground. You won't regret it.

### 3. Be Ant-Man

Sometimes, Ant-Man gets enormous and is the centre of attention while getting the job done. Other times, he gets tiny and



disappears because flight is better than fighting in that situation. When it's you and your kids at the park or beach, be huge. If another kid joins, you might shrink away so they can work on their social skills. If your kid is having a bad day, sometimes you address the behaviour, and others you step back and support them in working through normal feelings and emotions. Scott Lang knows when to get big and when to get small. Paul Rudd is a legend.

Be the hero of your own movie, coming to a theatre near you this spring.



## REGISTER YOUR CHILD

<p><b>FRÈRE-ANDRÉ</b> 400 Base Line West, London 519-471-6680</p> <p><b>SAINTE-JEANNE-D'ARC</b> 35 Fallons Lane, London 519-457-3141</p>	<p><b>SAINT-JEAN-DE-BRÉBEUF</b> 270 Chelton, London 519-963-1219</p> <p><b>SAINTE-MARGUERITE-BOURGOYS</b> 700 Bristol, Woodstock 519-539-2911</p>
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**CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE TODAY!**  
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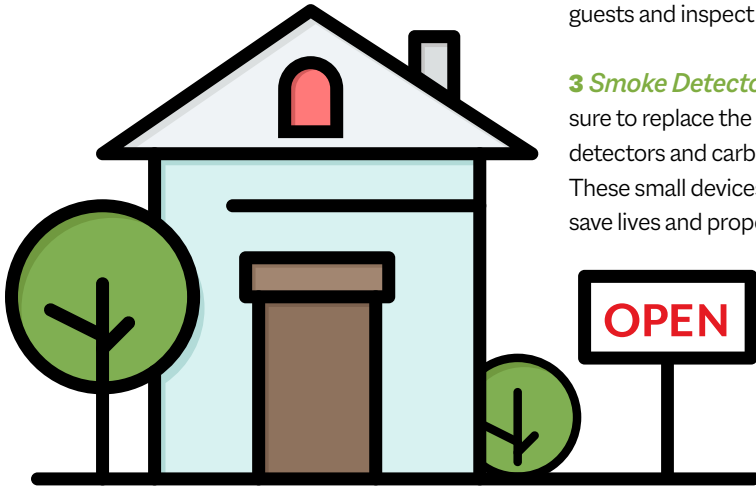




# COTTAGE LIFE

The nice weather is upon us and soon many will be heading to their cottage to open it up for the season. This property is our home away from home and where many people spend a great deal of time over the late spring, summer and early fall.

There are many things to inspect and carefully review to help prevent issues or insurance claims to ensure a safe and enjoyable cottage season.



**1 Wind damage** - Make sure you inspect the building (especially the roof) for any potential wind damage that occurred over the winter months. Don't forget any screened in porch areas or bunkies!

**2 Rodent damage** - In the cold winter months, it is common for many rodents and small animals to seek shelter in nearby cottages. When opening for the season, carefully inspect the cottage for any unwanted guests and inspect for any rodent damage.

**3 Smoke Detectors and Alarms** - Make sure to replace the batteries in all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. These small devices are a simple measure to save lives and property damage.

**4 Water** - As you turn on the water for the first time of the year, make sure to check the pipes for any leaks and

cracks that may have occurred over the cold winter months. This could help prevent larger issues down the road.

When insuring a cottage property, there are many factors that go into the coverage and insurance policy. Like your home policy, you will need to know information on the cottage to ensure it is properly covered and insured (see March's article for more information on this).

Many cottage properties consist of more than just the main building. With this, you will want to advise your broker of any other outbuildings or bunkies you have, as well as any water toys or boats you have. These all factor into the cost of the insurance for the property. Lastly, you will need to decide if you will be renting out the cottage, even if it's just to family or friends, or to third parties on airbnb/cottage rental sites. Renting of a cottage can impact the type of insurance you are offered and coverages you may be eligible for.

Contact our team to talk more about cottage insurance and find the right solution for you.

*Scott Sleightholm, CAIB, R.I.B.(Ont.), Vice President, Kenny Insurance Brokers*



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# ENTRY #4: JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN, DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD

Improved recovery started with accepting my diagnosis, "Because nothing changes if nothing changes."

I just posted to my 19K TikTok family that I'm leaving. You see, part of being successful in recovery is to stop being afraid of letting go when you know something is compromising your peace of mind. Should you change what you know is scary, but just because you can? If you have bipolar, it can be easy (as well as dangerous) to slide back into hiding your symptoms and fixing others. I know that little voice telling me, "Stephanie, you're overdoing it and you need to back off." My response? "Leave me alone. Look at how well I'm doing!" When I am fighting myself like this, I need to rest, re-evaluate and tell my doctors, husband, friends and family that I need a break before I become so symptomatic that I'm hospitalized. It can happen quickly.

Here are steps that put you in control of your mental health:

**1 Google a FREE Mood Chart.** Print it off. This is THE most powerful tool. Fill it out HONESTLY. DO NOT skip over anything for 30 days.

**2 Next, see your family doctor.** If you don't have one, contact your health unit for info on becoming a patient of new doctors. If you are a harm to yourself or others, go to your local emergency department now.

**3 Show your family doctor your mood chart.** Ask for a referral to a psychiatrist because they specialize in mental illnesses and can write prescriptions. These services are covered under OHIP.



Remember that "Nothing Changes If Nothing Changes."

Learn how to be your own advocate instead of running from your symptoms by doing for others. These steps will empower you. My tough love quote is, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten!"

What's your next move so 2024 is not just another year

full of feeling helpless? As Bon Jovi sings, "It's my life, It's NOW or NEVER."

*Stephanie Preston creates videos on managing bipolar disorder. She is a Social Service Worker, Health Care Aide and suffers from severe bipolar depression herself. She loves being a grandma and is Crossfit obsessed. Follow her at [www.tiktok.com/@bipolaronthebrain](https://www.tiktok.com/@bipolaronthebrain) and [www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain](https://www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain).*

## TIMBUKTU ALPACA FARM

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# PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING? READ THE CAUTION LABELS!

Calling all pregnant or breastfeeding people! In the quest for making informed choices about our health, food labels serve as indispensable tools, guiding our decisions at the grocery store. Recently, some changes have been made to these labels, particularly for supplemented foods. It's especially important for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding to understand these modifications to ensure informed decision-making. Don't worry, I've got you covered. Here's what you need to know!

Supplemented foods are foods or drinks with one or more supplemental ingredients added for reasons other than nutrition. These are different from fortified foods, which contain added ingredients for a nutritional purpose like adding folic acid to flour to help prevent brain and spine defects in babies. Examples of supplemented foods can include snack bars, fruit drinks and carbonated beverages. Supplemental ingredients can include:

- caffeine
- minerals such as calcium
- vitamins such as vitamin C
- amino acids such as L-leucine

Knowing how to recognize supplemented foods is especially important for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, and want to make the best choices for their baby. Unlike conventional foods, some supplemented foods may not be suitable for eating or drinking as often or as much as we want. The reason for this is that some of these added ingredients can pose a risk if overconsumed by the general population or if consumed at all by people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Health Canada recently introduced regulations that require new labels for these foods. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, all supplemented foods will be required to have these labels, but you might start seeing them sooner. These products will have a supplemented food facts table, instead

of a nutrition facts table, that includes a "Supplemented with" section, listing all the supplemental ingredients added. Some will also carry a caution identifier on the front of the label. This tells us to turn to the back or side of the product for more detailed cautions, such as "Not recommended for pregnant or breastfeeding women" or "Do not drink on the same day as any other supplemented foods or supplements with the same supplemental ingredients."

Find out more about supplemented foods and their new labels at [www.canada.ca/supplemented-foods](http://www.canada.ca/supplemented-foods).



Jenn Giurgevich is the founder of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business.

## THEY WORK HARD FOR THE MONEY!

### KID ZONE

#### What are your Mom and Dad's jobs?

**Adi:** My mom is a photographer and my dad is a foot doctor.

**Lander:** The same as Adi said!

#### What do you think they do at work all day?

**Adi:** My mom takes photos and my dad helps people with feet in their shoes.

**Lander:** Mom shoots weddings and minis and newborns, and dad helps people with orthotics and getting new shoes.

#### What job would you like to have in the future and why?

**Adi:** I would like to be a teacher/singer/dentist.

**Lander:** I would like to be a foot doctor and make dad's business bigger, and a veterinarian.

#### If you were in charge of packing a lunch for one of your parents for work, what would it include?

**Adi:** I'd pack carrots, a turkey sandwich, cucumbers, and Reese's Pieces for mom's treat, and vegan chocolate for dad's treat.

**Lander:** I'd pack carrots, cucumbers, steak and a Reese's cup. .

Meet our Kid Zone writers, 11 and 7 year old siblings, **Lander and Adi!** Each month, they'll be sharing perspectives on life as a child sees it.

# CHOOSE JOY!

This photo brings a smile to my face because it brings me joy. It represents a sudden and unexpected interruption, truthfully, slightly unsettling. This affectionate cat assertively made itself comfortable on my chest, playfully offering affectionate gestures with vigorous purring. While I could have easily pushed it away, I chose to embrace the moment. I chose gladness.

Choosing joy is deliberate - it requires nurturing. It's not our automatic response to surprises, challenges, setbacks or changes in plans. It's akin to exercising a muscle. First, we must recognize and understand that we have the option to choose joy, then, we must strengthen our capacity for it.

Joy differs from happiness. Happiness hinges on circumstances and achieving desired outcomes, while joy emanates from a spiritual place. It offers the ability to choose joy irrespective of circumstances - a place where gratitude is found in the present moment regardless of what is happening. It embodies a belief that life has its highs and lows, yet things will improve and there is hope.

*Proverbs 17:22* states, "a joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up bones". A heart filled with joy holds the ability to heal, whereas a spirit that is broken can negatively impact our well-being. It is essential to nurture our joyfulness to build inner strength when facing life's numerous challenges. While it may not alter your situation right away, it will nourish your soul.

So, next time when encountering obstacles, pause, and try joy as your response.



Marcy Demelo is an Entrepreneur, Career Coach and Educator, teaching you how to reinvent yourself to live out your passion. Find her on Instagram at [waymaker\\_inc](#) and at [www.waymakerinc.ca](#).

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*Dr. Timucin Ari DDS, Ph.D, FRCDC(C), Ari Pediatric Dentistry and Orthodontics*

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# R.A.W. REALLY AUTHENTIC WOMEN




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THE R.A.W. Podcast  
HOSTED BY Sabina Manji

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Each month we introduce you to a business that offers families in London and the surrounding area services or products you won't want to miss. 

Ready to get real? *The R.A.W. Podcast with Sabina Manji* is truly the podcast for Really Authentic Women and Men alike!

Their mission is to create a safe space to connect and share raw moments of authenticity, for Really Authentic Women (R.A.W.) at all stages of life. It is so important to give everyone a voice. Through different paths, opportunities and circumstances, we are all in search of the same happiness, and what better way than to embrace this together! This is a place where we believe your past does not define who you are, but can inspire and empower yourself and others!

The podcast is hosted by Sabina Manji, with her infectious energy and engaging personality, and it has always been in her heart to give and support others within her community. As a champion for the vulnerable who continues to speak up and speak out on behalf of others, she felt compelled to create a platform where people could feel empowered to be their authentic selves in the comfort of a like-minded community. With her 25+ years as editor of *The Mom & Caregiver* magazine, Sabina witnessed the need for authentic sharing and providing a safe space and platform for women to feel free to speak their views and ask questions on any subject without fear of judgment. You can expect a variety of amazing and dynamic guests, each with their own thought provoking journeys and opinions to share. R.A.W. is so excited to share that there will be featured women AND men on the podcasts. Guests leave in awe - they are asked questions they never expected to be asked and given answers they never thought they would.

No topic is off the table! Grab your favourite bevy and join Sabina on the couch every other Tuesday for stories that will bring laughter, tears, hope and the reminder that you are never alone.

"The world can be cruel, but don't let it define you. Use your past to fuel you. Don't let it make you a victim."

With gratitude and sealed with a kiss,  
Sabina Manji




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# NAVIGATING DISAPPOINTMENTS TOGETHER

Life is a series of ups and downs and it's natural for children to face disappointment along the way. When my son confides in me about a disappointment, my natural instinct is to think of solutions and ways to fix it, especially if he is feeling sad and dejected.

Disappointments are valuable life lessons that help develop skills like perseverance, empathy, resilience and problem-solving. If you try to protect kids from disappointment, it will rob them of developing these essential skills. Without a healthy approach to navigating disappointments, they can easily feel overwhelmed, causing them to give up or quit.

Below are four strategies to help you and the child in your life effectively deal with disappointment:

*Sara Westbrook is a professional speaker and creator of UPower Inc, offering keynotes, presentations and workshops on 'Emotions Change Choices' to audiences ages 4-100. She can be found at [sarawestbrook.com](http://sarawestbrook.com) or on Instagram @iamsarawestbrook*

### 1 Acknowledge Emotions

Let them know that it's okay to feel disappointed and that it's an emotion that everyone encounters at various times in their life. Remember to acknowledge your own emotions when you see a child experiencing disappointment. Being able to feel your own discomfort is an important part of teaching them to lean into their uncomfortable emotions.

### 2 Validate Emotions

Refrain from dismissing their emotions. Avoid phrases like "It's not a big deal" or "You're overreacting." Such statements invalidate their emotions and can make them feel unheard or misunderstood. Instead, validate their emotions by saying, 'I understand you're feeling really disappointed right now' or 'That must have been really tough for you.'

### 3. Teach Emotional Management

During disappointing times, it's important to help kids explore ways to manage their emotions that will bring them comfort and calmness, such as deep breathing, listening to their favourite music or finding an activity that brings them joy.



### 4. Encourage a Problem-Solving Mindset

Together, brainstorm potential solutions or strategies to improve the situation. This approach gives them a plan to better prepare them for handling future disappointments.

Providing a supportive and understanding environment goes a long way to helping a child not only navigate disappointment, but also develop resilience. The added bonus is that you'll strengthen the connection you have with your kids.



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# I'VE GOT YOU!

Recently, a close friend of mine shared she was starting the separation process from her marriage. It hit close to the heart when I learned of her update, as I could empathize with the life chapter of separation and all it can entail emotionally. I felt deeply for what she was navigating, however, I especially understood that initial stage of accepting the decision that the relationship has cycled through and it was time to start taking massive action.

During my own divorce journey, my community was a vital component of supporting me as I discovered strength, clarity, courage, self-love and personal power. They were there each time I needed them to

be, in the way I needed them to be most. And through that initiation into the next version of myself, I discovered two meaningful ways they made me feel good, that I would like to share with you... in hopes that you can support your community also.

**1 IDENTIFY NEEDS** - Asking the question "what can I do to support you?" when your person is moving through some choppy waters is meaningful. It may take time for them to fully sink into figuring out the answer and sharing it with you, however knowing someone's got your back because they want to make you feel better is the love they need in that moment.

**2 HOLD SPACE** - Just let them talk as you hold the space and listen. No need to solve their problems or take on any responsibility for their emotions. Let them lead the conversation and honour their authentic expression. Try and acknowledge their experience by validating their feelings if you can. An example of this can be: "I hear you. What you're feeling makes sense. I'm sorry."

It's a lot witnessing your person go through something so significantly life changing. However, knowing that you always have their best interest at heart and feeling safe to turn to you when they need it, is an awesome way to support them as they get up on their surfboard and ride the waves - with you right beside them.



Lyndsay Campbell is a co-parenting Mom of two boys, Branch Manager by day, and Reiki Master by night.



# A TALE OF TWO CLOSETS

**A**t 46, I've lost nearly 100 pounds naturally. With this transformation, I have experienced many surprising wins and some not-so-welcome symptoms. I had never considered that I would share closets with my tween daughter, but alas, here I am. Welcome to my world of tween twinning, where the lines between wardrobes have blurred.

**PRO: Easier on the Pocketbook**

Sharing clothes with my daughter has its perks. Thankfully, she loves my good fashion sense (insert rolling eyes), so we don't have to duplicate the more expensive brand names. Raiding each other's closets is saving a fortune. Who needs new outfits when you can borrow from your mini-me?

**CON: Fashion Showdowns**

Yet, it's not all sunshine and roses. We often disagree over who wears what and when. Our closets require a central sign-out database, not to mention the clothes that have entered the dark abyss of Never-Seen-Again-Land.

**PRO: Fashion Montages**

We re-enact our fave movie moments, like the fashion montage scene from "The Sweetest Thing", trying on ridiculous outfits, dancing around and doing our best catwalk. (Ok, maybe just I'm doing this, but it's worth the "you're so embarrassing, mom, moment" and giggles.) It's like we're Barbie and Skipper on a shopping spree!

**CON: Wardrobe Malfunctions**

They don't call me 'Janet like Jackson' for any other reason... wardrobe malfunctions. I have experienced my share of "Bend and Snap" mishaps, because, well, let's face it, I will never be built like a tween again in my life.

**PRO: Keeping Up With the...**

From Kardashian to Swift, we cover lots of fashion ground. Sharing keeps us trendy. Our wardrobe is enviable, from TikTok-inspired gear to my "vintage" '90s throwbacks. We're like the Plastics from Mean Girls, only with fewer heels and fewer Regina Georges.

**CON: Shape Shifters**

Despite wearing the same size, our shapes differ. What looks chic on her often resembles a sausage casing on me. One size definitely does not fit all.

From fashion montages to fashion faux pas, wish me luck as I navigate this uncharted territory with grace (or at least a good laugh).



Janet Smith is a proud mom of one daughter and a marketing professional who is grateful for her rural roots in the London area. Follow Janet's funny and honest journey at IG & TT | @re.marketable.janet or FB | @janetsiddallsmith

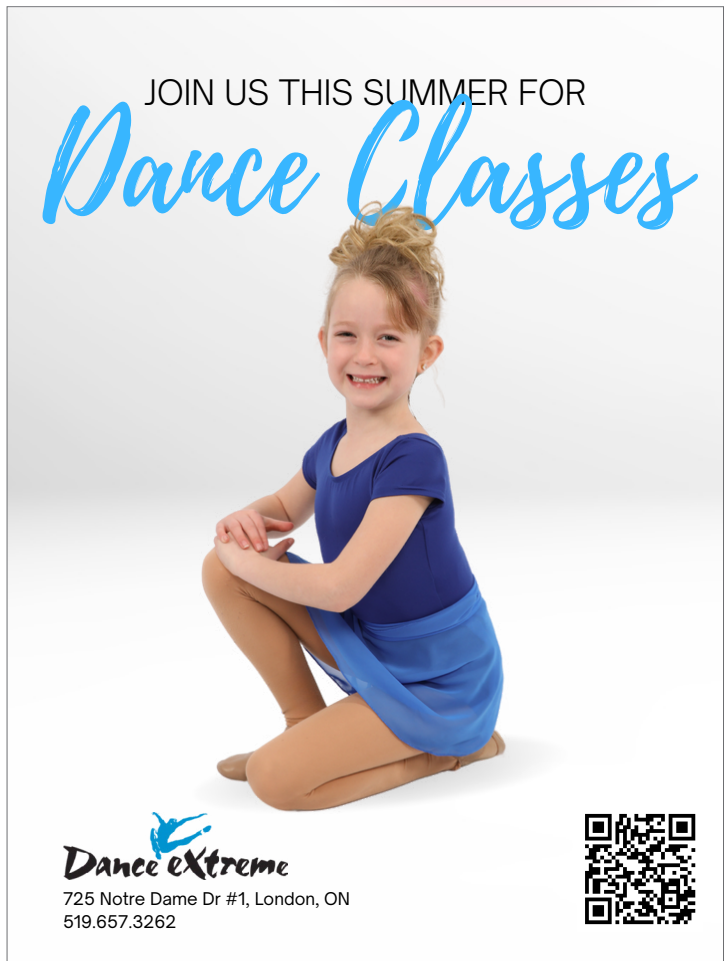


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# CHOOSING NATURE OVER SCREENS



As May arrives with its vibrant blooms and lengthening days, it presents an ideal opportunity to reconnect children with the wonders of the natural world. In this digital age, where screens often dominate young minds, fostering a love for nature in kids has become more crucial than ever. Here are a few delightful ways to immerse children in the beauty of nature.

## EXPLORING WILDFLOWERS:



May is a spectacular time for wildflowers, with bursts of colour popping up everywhere. Take children on a nature walk, observing different flowers, teaching them their names, and encouraging them to look closely. Bring along a field guide to identify species, or a camera to capture these memories, turning the outing into an educational adventure.

*Ashley Satchell, owner, Featherfields*

**BIRD WATCHING:** May is peak bird migration season, so equip children with binoculars and a bird guide, and head to local parks or nature reserves. Teach them about bird calls and behaviours, and challenge them to spot different species. Bird watching fosters patience and a sense of wonder in kids as they witness these feathered travellers.



**GARDENING:** May is prime time for gardening with children. Involve them in planting seeds or young plants in the backyard or community garden. Teach them about nurturing plants, watering and weeding. Gardening instills responsibility and a connection to the cycles of growth and seasons.



**PICNICS AND OUTDOOR PLAY:** With warmer weather, May is perfect for outdoor picnics and play. Organize a picnic in a nearby park or forest. Encourage activities like tree climbing, hide-and-seek, or simply lying on the grass and cloud-watching. Such experiences promote unstructured outdoor play, which is essential for children's physical and mental well-being and development.



**NATURE CRAFTS:** Gather natural materials like leaves, twigs and flowers to create crafts. Help children make flower crowns, leaf rubbings or nature collages. Crafting with natural items encourages creativity and an appreciation for the beauty of natural forms.



**STARGAZING:** May evenings offer clear skies for stargazing. Introduce children to constellations and planets visible this month. Use a telescope if available, or simply lie on blankets and marvel at the starlit sky. Stargazing sparks curiosity about the universe and our place in it.



In a world filled with distractions, May invites us to slow down and savor the gifts of nature. By engaging children in these outdoor activities, we can instill in them a lifelong love for the natural world while fostering their physical, mental and emotional development. Let this May be a time of joyful exploration and discovery in nature for our children!






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# I'M LEANING TO THE SIDE!

Scoliosis awareness month is coming up in June and we want to get a head start in educating you about this condition. What is scoliosis you may ask? Well, it is when the spinal column is no longer straight and the vertebral column is laterally curved in nature, appearing like a C or an S from the back. This curve can give the appearance that one is leaning to the side.

Technically, it is not considered scoliosis unless the curve is greater than 10 degrees.

A curve can be present in the thoracic (upper) region of the spine, the lumbar (lower) region of the spine or between these regions (thoracolumbar region). Curves can also be single (C shaped) or double (S shaped).

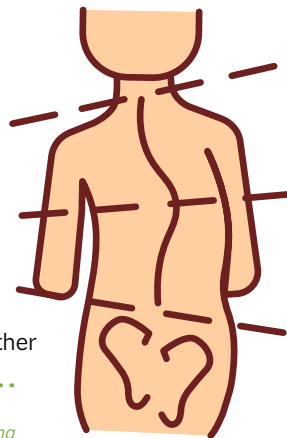
### There are three types of Scoliosis:

- 80% of scoliosis diagnoses have no known cause and are classified as **Idiopathic Scoliosis**, which can be further

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classified as Infantile (under 3 years of age), Juvenile (3-9 years of age) or Adolescent (10+ years of age)

- **Neuromuscular Scoliosis** occurs secondary to an underlying neuromuscular condition. Cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and spina bifida are all conditions with muscle imbalances that may pull the spinal column in different directions, resulting in scoliosis. Usually the goal of this type of scoliosis is not necessarily correction,



but to prevent further deformity. After the majority of the child's growth has occurred and if the curve is greater than 50 degrees, surgery is usually the next course of action with rods and pins to stabilize and correct the spinal curve.

- **Congenital Scoliosis** is when the curve develops secondary to a misshapen vertebrae. For this type, if the child is in pain or the curve is progressing rapidly, surgery is indicated.

The progression of scoliosis is different for every individual however during growth is when we are most concerned of the condition worsening. Some of the common signs you can look for when determining if you or your child may have scoliosis are uneven shoulders, one raised hip, uneven waist, body leaning to one side, or a rib hump (scapula sticks out on one side when you bend over). Treatment of scoliosis can include but is not limited to: physical therapy (to help increase muscular strength to improve alignment), orthotic bracing (TLSO) to apply the pressures necessary to improve or prevent further deformity, or surgery. If you feel like you may have scoliosis, please reach out to your doctor and they can do a physical examination or send you for X-ray imaging.



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# A SURPRISE DIAGNOSIS: LYME DISEASE & HEARTWORM TESTING

Honey's blood test came back positive for Lyme," the veterinarian explained. Honey, the sweet golden retriever, had visited the clinic that day for a quick blood test, just as she'd done every spring.

As always, her veterinarian had wanted to ensure she was heartworm-negative prior to starting her annual heartworm prevention on June 1st. As a precaution, the blood test would not only screen for heartworm, but for three tick-borne diseases as well.

The appointment had started splendidly! The skilled veterinary technician had drawn blood while her assistant gave Honey Cheese Whiz on a lick mat to distract her from the quick poke. Then, the assistant had used a few drops of blood to run the test in the in-house lab. Within minutes, a blue dot had appeared on the test strip. Its positioning indicated Honey's blood contained antibodies to "borrelia burgdorferi" bacteria. In English? Honey was negative for heartworm - but she likely had Lyme disease.

"How could this be?," the family wondered. They knew that Lyme disease is transmitted by ticks, but Honey had (very happily) consumed all six monthly doses of parasite prevention last summer!

The veterinarian explained, "We know from her blood test today that those six doses of parasite prevention successfully protected her against heartworm last year. You likely also protected Honey from ticks during the months when tick populations are highest. However, unfortunately, ticks in Southern Ontario are active during the winter as well.

"But the good news is that we likely caught the infection early with her annual blood work! Now we can determine a treatment plan to keep her pain-free."

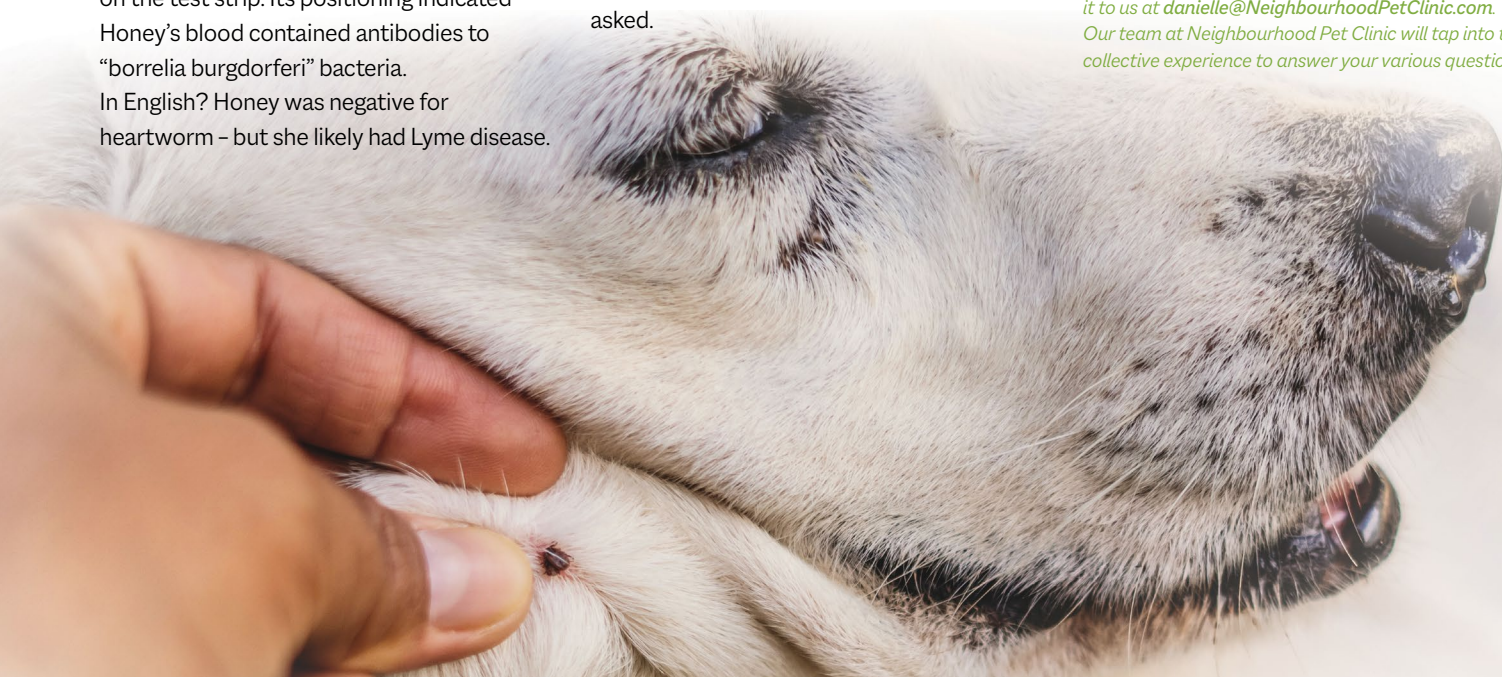
"What should we do this year?" the family asked.

"Going forward, I recommend giving parasite prevention to all your furry family members every month," the veterinarian advised. "Heartworm is only a risk from June to November, but ticks transmit Lyme - and other diseases - twelve months of the year."

Honey's family left the clinic with twelve months of parasite prevention and a follow-up appointment booked. They knew that they'd have to do more in-depth bloodwork and monitor Honey closely going forward, but they were happy to do it to keep Honey comfortable.

As for Honey, her biggest concern was licking leftover Cheese Whiz from her lips... and everyone agreed to keep it that way!

*Dr. I. Wonder is here to answer your questions regarding your furry family members. If you have a question, email it to us at [danielle@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com](mailto:danielle@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com). Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your various questions.*



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