

A FREE
MAGAZINE

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

NOVEMBER 2026
VOLUME 28 ISSUE 11

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PRESCHOOL - SCHOOL AGE - FAMILY

The Grown-Ups in Their Corner

As parents, we spend a lot of time thinking about who our children spend their time with. Their friends matter, of course, but so do the grown-ups they meet along the way.

Teachers, coaches, dance teachers, music instructors, and other mentors can become an important part of a child's world. They're another person cheering them on, encouraging them through challenges, and sometimes seeing something special in them before they see it themselves.

That's one of the wonderful things about extracurricular activities. Yes, children are learning to dance, play soccer, paint, or make music, but they're also building relationships with adults outside their family and school.

A great teacher does more than teach a skill. They notice when a child is having a tough day. They celebrate effort, not just achievement. They encourage children to try again when something is difficult and remind them that mistakes are part of learning.

For parents, it's worth thinking about this when choosing activities. We often ask, "What will my child learn?" But we should also be asking, "Who will be teaching them?" Does this person make my child feel seen? Do they model kindness and respect? Are they helping my child grow as a person as well as in their activity?

In dance, relationships between teachers and students can grow over many years. A teacher who once held a preschooler's hand as they nervously entered their first class may one day be cheering that same dancer through their teenage years.

Our kids can never have too many good people in their corner.

As the holiday season approaches, it's a wonderful time to appreciate the teachers, coaches, and mentors helping our children become confident, resilient, kind humans.

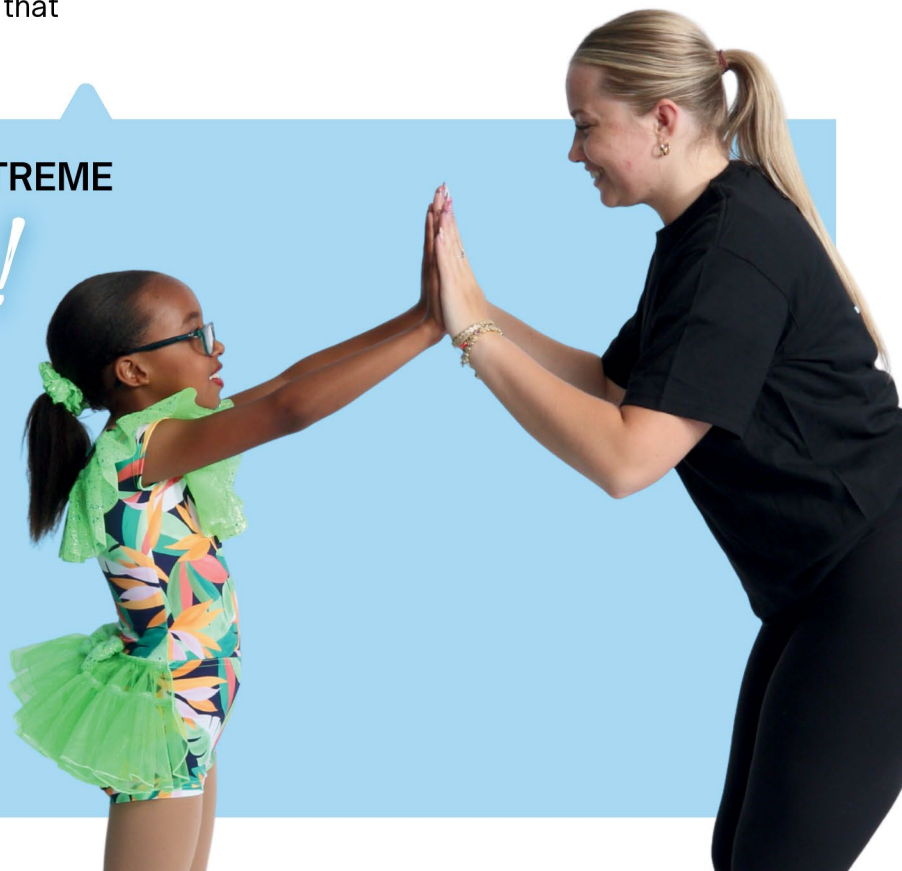
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Marcus and Mekhi loved talking on the phone and typing on the keyboard at their high-tech shoot. Mom had their hair done the weekend before the shoot, so ensured they wore durags to keep their braids looking fresh. Thanks to ManagePoint Technologies for the techy gear!



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"If you have any comments or suggestions,
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THE MOM & CAREGIVER is published by
Anibas Productions Limited, Publications Mail,
Agreement Number 40834037
PO Box 29118, London, ON N6K 4L9
www.themomandcaregiver.com

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THE
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LET THE WIND BLOW THE FOG OUT OF YOUR SOUL!

"It was November – the month of crimson sunsets, parting birds, deep, sad hymns of the sea, passionate wind-songs in the pines. Anne roamed through the pineland alleys in the park, and as she said, let that great sweeping wind blow the fogs out of her soul."

– *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery

Is there a more iconic Canadian novel than *Anne of Green Gables*? Generations have grown up reading the tales of Anne, a girl with a plethora of emotions written by an author who had a way with words. We truly hope our November issue helps to blow the fog out of your soul this November!

We're beginning with a tough one – what to do when a pet dies. Losing a fur-baby can be very difficult for the adults of the home, who then have to pull up their boot straps and support the kiddos. Find an age by age guide to helping your children cope and remember a pet on page 8.

We're also tackling a very important topic in today's society – preventing gender-based violence early. Learn

five things parents can do to teach their children about healthy relationships from a very young age (don't wait until they're teens!) on page 6.

Let's lighten things up by giving you permission to do something you might think is not allowed – KEEP DINNER SIMPLE! Are scrambled eggs, toast and some cut-up fruit dinner? How about pasta with jarred tomato sauce, frozen vegetables and pre-cooked chicken? Find out what our nutritionist, Jenn, has to say on page 22.

Lastly, we would like to take a moment to remember all of those who have given so much for us to enjoy the freedoms we do today. This Remembrance Day, let us never forget those who fought, saved and lost, and those who continue to do so. Our Kid Zone kids have suggested new symbols and traditions (page 10), and we believe it is so special that our youngest citizens are still remembering.

May your November be full of all the hidden beauty that this sometimes dreary month brings. Here's to noticing the pretty sunsets, honking geese and wind in the trees (just like Anne did).

PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR

Sabina



25+
YEARS

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EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2026

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS:

CLOCKS *Fall* BACK!

01ST

Mrs. Doubtfire,
Canada Life Place,
www.canadalifeplace.com

05TH

KPOP Infinity,
Centennial Hall,
www.centennialhall.london.ca

04TH

Remembrance Day Workshop,
Covent Garden Market
www.coventmarket.com

08TH

French Conversation Circle,
Masonville Library,
www.lpl.ca

10TH

REMEMBRANCE DAY:
Lest we forget

11TH

Forest City Sips,
Canada Life Place,
www.canadalifeplace.com

14TH

Dinosaur Storytime,
Pond Mills Library,
www.lpl.ca

19TH

Fibre Arts Festival and Sale,
Covent Garden Market,
www.coventmarket.com

21ST

Curious Connections
(birth to age 6),
Children's Library,
www.lpl.ca

23RD

A Christmas Carol,
Grand Theatre,
www.grandtheatre.com

24TH

London Knights vs. Niagara
Icedogs, Canada Life Place,
www.canadalifeplace.com

27TH

Jann Arden and Her Holiday
Orchestra, Canada Life Place,
www.canadalifeplace.com

29TH



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL FOR MOMS & CAREGIVERS

November launches the most demanding season of the year — family meals, holiday shopping and endless to-do lists. For caregivers, personal nutrition and fitness are always the first things sacrificed.

They don't have to be.

You don't need hours in the gym or a restrictive diet to thrive this winter. You need three simple habits and the intention to protect them.

Anchor your plate. Fill half with non-starchy vegetables, a quarter with lean protein like turkey or ham, and a quarter with smart carbohydrates like roasted potatoes. Every meal. Every gathering.

Focus on quality movement. Aim for 150 minutes of weekly activity. Pressed for time? A 15-minute bodyweight circuit — squats, high knees, push-ups — maintains your strength and burns off holiday stress.

Ditch the guilt. One indulgent meal will not derail your journey. Consistency over weeks and months matters infinitely more than perfection on one afternoon.

Kevin Cope |
Founder, The Cope Effect | @thecopeeffect

“A parent's love is whole no matter
how many times divided.”

Robert Brault

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PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE STARTS EARLY

Many people think gender-based violence, or GBV, starts when children become teens or adults. But children start learning about healthy relationships much earlier. Parents and caregivers can help children learn respect, kindness and empathy every day.

GBV is harm that happens because of someone's gender. It can include controlling behaviour, threats, emotional harm, physical harm or sexual harm. It is a serious public health issue in Canada. Prevention can start at home, through the way adults talk, listen and show respect.

FIVE THINGS PARENTS CAN DO

1 Challenge gender stereotypes

Children should feel free to like different toys, clothes, activities and emotions. Try not to limit children based on gender. When children feel accepted, they are more likely to respect others too.

2 Help children name their feelings

Children need words for their feelings. Help them name feelings such

as anger, sadness, joy, worry and fear. When children can name their feelings, they can talk about what they need and ask for help (CMHA 2021).

3 Show respectful relationships

Children learn by watching adults. They notice how adults talk, listen and solve problems. You can help by using calm words, listening to others, and saying sorry when needed (Hunter n.d.).

4 Talk about consent early

Consent means giving permission. It also means respecting when someone says no. Children can learn consent when adults respect their body space, choices and feelings (ANOVA 2026).

5 Talk about media messages

Children see many messages online, on TV and in games. Talk with them about what they see. You can ask: Is this kind? Is this fair? Does this show respect? These talks help children think about what is healthy and what is not (Canadian Pediatric Society 2026).

Preventing gender-based violence starts when children are young. Small actions can make a big difference. When adults teach respect, kindness, equality and healthy communication, children can grow up with stronger and safer relationships.

ANOVA is a community agency that provides shelter, counselling, crisis response, education and resources for individuals impacted by gender-based violence. Reach the ANOVA 24-Hour Crisis and Support Line: 519-642-3000 or 1-800-265-1576. More information: <https://www.anovafuture.org/support/local-resources/>

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Submitted for the Middlesex-London Health Unit by
Heather Bywaters RN, BScN, MN





WHAT IS IN A NAME?

Many of you may have heard in the media recently that the name of PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome) has been changed to PMOS (polyendocrine metabolic syndrome). Is this just semantic or is there a significance in this name change?

PMOS is a condition that affects 8 % of Canadian women. Classically the illness was thought to be a hormonal disorder that was associated with irregular periods, unwanted hair growth, acne and weight gain. There were sometimes but not always cysts in the

ovaries of women with the syndrome. The focus was on its impacts on reproductive health and fertility.

There are profound effects of the syndrome on metabolic health with weight gain and high risk for heart disease, elevated cholesterol and diabetes. The change in the name puts the discussion around these metabolic changes front and centre to the discussion. This means that prevention of diabetes and heart disease is key.

The use of ultrasound to look for cysts is

no longer recommended. The birth control pill might be useful for controlling irregular periods but does not need to be the only treatment. Early lifestyle changes including a focus on diet (less refined sugars, more protein) and exercise (more strength training) need to become the first discussion around treating PMOS.

The name matters. If you suspect you may have PMOS or have been diagnosed visit www.pcossupport.org for information to help empower you to managing the symptoms.



.....
Dr. Bhooma Bhayana is a family physician in London and the mother of two young men and proud grandmother of three! She continues to find wonder and enjoyment in family practice despite more than 30 years on the job!



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WHEN A PET DIES



The greatest gift our pets give us is unconditional love. When there is unconditional love, there is deep grief which is expressed uniquely within each family member when a pet dies. How a child expresses their grief depends on their age and developmental stage.

TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLER

Children age 1-5 do not have the cognitive maturity to understand death. They will view death of a pet as temporary or that the pet is simply just absent. They may show signs of regressions such as reverting to a younger age (baby talk, bed wetting, clingy) which is “safer” for them. The best way to approach the death of a pet with this age group is:

- 1 Concrete wording such as died, dead.
- 2 Softer words such as “Douggy is gone” can be confusing for this age group as they primarily use magical thinking.

- 3 Use simple language with regards to what happened to their body. “Douggy’s heart stopped beating and when his heart stopped beating, his body stopped working.”

- 4 Try to relate this loss to life experiences “Remember when you squished that bug and it stopped moving?”

- 5 Validate their feelings and be open about your feelings. Parents are the model for the way our children grieve in life.

SCHOOL AGE

Children age 5-8 are starting to understand that death is permanent. This age group is still prone to magical thinking, so it is important to still use concrete language such as “died” or “dead.” Validate their feelings, normalize the stages of grief by sharing your feelings and openly discussing them as a family.

PRE-TEENS TO TEENS

Children age 9-18 have the cognitive maturity to understand the permanency of death. The best way to approach this age group is:

- 1 Validate their feelings and discuss the stages of grief which helps to normalize it.
- 2 Be open about your feelings and how you cope with the loss.
- 3 Involve them in ways to remember their pet.

There are many ways for children to cope and remember their pet. Consider making a memory box, holding a small ceremony or writing a goodbye letter to the pet. Avoid rushing out to replace the beloved pet so that your child has the time they need to grieve in their unique way.

Becky Morrison is a Nurse Practitioner and certified ATTCS advanced clinical trauma therapist with a specialty in grief. She is finally, after years of infertility, a doting mother to one little boy, and fur mom of her gentle giant, Stella. She is, and always will be, a strong advocate for mental wellness at all ages.



NOVEMBER: THE MONTH YOUR HOUSE STARTS TALKING BACK

November has arrived, which means three things: it's dark by 5 p.m., someone has already mentioned Christmas, and your house has suddenly developed opinions.

The furnace is making a weird noise. The thermostat says 21°, but your toes strongly disagree.

Someone is standing beside you saying, "Do you hear that?" No. No, you do not. Because you are currently trying to remember if you packed lunches, paid the daycare bill, bought milk, and where on earth that missing mitten went. Welcome to November.

For moms and caregivers, this time of year can feel like the Olympics of keeping everyone warm, fed, organized and somewhat on schedule. So, before winter really gets going, give your home a little attention too.

Check the furnace filter. Make sure your vents aren't blocked by furniture, toys or the mysterious collection of stuff that somehow

lives in front of every vent. Test your carbon monoxide and smoke alarms. And if your furnace sounds like it's preparing for takeoff, maybe don't ignore it.

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JOURNAL
ENTRY #34

SELF DOUBT

I went to college in the Social Service Worker Program because my heart was broken and I wanted to fix it. Living with untreated bipolar disorder, PTSD, in addition to severe ADHD, added to my pain. People just couldn't relate to me, and I had no idea why when I was trying so hard to be likeable.

Self doubt comes from a lack of belief in what you're capable of. Bullying at school, being excluded from after work activities, and not being included in family gatherings are examples of rejection (potentially causing an individual to feel less valued, less confident, and result in constant feelings of self doubt in every aspect of one's life). If this describes you, you might find yourself always second guessing your decisions, as well as always needing to ask others for their opinion for fear of making a mistake in your life. I used to live like that. I never believed in myself. It might have looked like I did on the outside, but the anxiety I carried fearing doing the wrong thing was such a burden. I went through a lot as a child which shaped how

I thought about myself, and how I thought others saw me. I believed nobody liked or loved me.

***I rarely have self doubt now.
Here are my rules:***

- 1** If someone doesn't value you, be polite and move on.
- 2** Don't be codependent with people. If you get the ick with someone you meet, cut it off ASAP! Your gut never lies. I would rather have peace in my life alone, than hang out with people who suck the life out of me.
- 3** I love myself. I am not in love with myself. That's a big difference.
- 4** I take my meds and see my psychiatrist every month. Don't neglect your health.

My life is full of joy now because I know that I am here for a reason, whether you like me or not. You will find living this way very freeing and that people want to be around others that feel like they're winning at life!



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 and www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain.



KID ZONE

LIFE AS A CHILD SEES IT

REMEMBRANCE DAY THROUGH KIDS' EYES

Assistant editor, Melissa, has many memories of Remembrance Day as a child and youth, from placing a wreath at the cenotaph in her Girl Guide uniform, to playing Last Post on the trumpet at her local Legion. We wondered how children today, some 30-40 years later view it. We are honoured to hear from our Kid Zone kids.

If you could ask a veteran one question, what would you ask?

Lander & Adi - Do you still have any friends from the war?

The poppy is a symbol of remembrance. If you could create a new symbol of remembrance, what would it be?

Lander & Adi - A butterfly.



What do you think the world would be like if there were no wars?

Lander & Adi - Control controlled by hateful people.

If you could begin a Remembrance Day tradition for kids, what would it be?

Lander & Adi - To bake red cookies.

Meet our Kid Zone writers, 12 and 8 year old siblings, Lander and Adi! Each month, they'll be sharing perspectives on life as a child sees it.





WHAT IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO TAKE THE LONG WAY?



What if the next chapter of your life didn't have to take years to unfold?

We often assume that change happens slowly. We work hard, learn our lessons, overcome our obstacles and wait for the right time. Sometimes that is exactly what growth requires. But sometimes, one decision, one shift in perspective or one courageous step can change the direction of our lives much faster than we expected.

I've recently begun revisiting a concept called "skipping levels" — the idea that we don't always have to move through life one

level at a time. Sometimes we can make a decision that takes us somewhere entirely different.

This idea has been on my mind as I prepare to take the Power Jumps course through Elevated Worldwide for the second time. I also just purchased the book *Power Jumps: The Art of Skipping Levels and Living Life on Fire* by Tony Child, Bill Banta and Nicole Kernohan — three people whose work has influenced my own growth and learning. I'm fascinated by the possibility that we sometimes make life harder than it needs to be because we believe we have to follow a certain path a certain way.

As caregivers, parents, partners and professionals, we can become very good at putting ourselves last. We tell ourselves that someday we'll make the change, pursue the

dream, set the boundary or create more space for ourselves. But what if "someday" could begin with one decision today?

Over the next few issues, I'll be exploring a concept that has been challenging the way I think about growth, change and what's possible in our lives. Perhaps the biggest jump isn't about becoming someone different. Perhaps it's about finally giving ourselves permission to become more fully who we already are. The "True You".



Alicia Nolan is the founder of Alicia Nolan Life Coaching, where she helps individuals build confidence, reconnect with themselves and create lives they truly love. A certified life coach, speaker and registered dental hygienist, Alicia believes meaningful change begins with small, intentional steps. Visit her at anolanlifecoaching.ca or on Instagram @an.lifecoaching.



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Sat Dec 12: 10am-9pm
Sun Dec 13: 10am-5pm

Week Three

Fri Dec 18: 4pm-10pm
Sat Dec 19: 10am-9pm
Sun Dec 20: 10am-5pm

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LOVE AS MEDICINE

I'm Dr. Michelle, a family physician, caregiver coach and mom of two little girls.

My point is this: you are allowed to be on your own list. For example, here is a night I'll never forget.

I was kneeling by the bath, four weeks after thyroid surgery, with my two toddlers splashing beside me. I had followed every instruction my doctors gave me and expected to be back at work already. But when my kids asked, as they always do, for a song and a story, I was reminded that my voice was gone and I

didn't know when it would return. I felt my throat tighten and my eyes sting. I had spent years being selfless as a wife and mother, just as my mom was before I lost her young, and my body had finally demanded I stop. So I kept following my doctors' advice, and I added something to my treatment plan: love as medicine, beginning with the love I give myself.

A few years on, that choice has become The Joyful Rx Method™, your prescription for joy. My voice came back. My kids are happier and more resourceful, and now they remind me of the lessons I taught them.

I don't know what your particular chaos looks like, only mine. I do know we all need a village, and I'd love to be part of yours. Start by tuning into The JoyfulRx podcast where we explore topics relevant to moms and caregivers each week. Then email your questions or topics to info@joyfulrx.ca (I read every one).

The
Joyful Rx™
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Dr. Michelle Welch is a physician, certified coach and founder of The Joyful Rx Method™. She helps moms and caregivers who feel themselves slipping away in the demands of caregiving reconnect with themselves, their dreams and their joy.



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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. 



Melanie Smith has spent 15 years transforming her clients' financial anxiety into confidence. As a financial planner with deep expertise and genuine compassion for her clients, she's built a practice that goes far beyond traditional wealth management. Instead, it's about understanding what truly matters to each family she serves.

"My clients don't come to me because they love spreadsheets," Melanie notes with a knowing smile. "They come because they want to sleep at night, knowing their family is financially secure and their future is protected." This client-centered philosophy shapes everything she does, from her first conversation to the ongoing strategies she develops.

Her specialized focus reflects real-world needs. Melanie works with:

- Women taking control of their wealth
- Medical professionals managing complex tax situations
- Business owners building enterprises
- Families navigating caregiving or retirement transitions

These aren't straightforward financial situations, and they require more than generic advice—they require someone who truly understands their unique challenges.

What sets Melanie apart is her planning-first approach. Rather than jumping to investment recommendations, she listens carefully to understand her clients' actual goals and concerns. Only after deeply understanding these questions does she build a personalized roadmap that integrates tax-efficient strategies, retirement income planning and charitable giving aligned with her clients' values.

Beyond individual client work, Melanie is passionate about financial education. She regularly hosts Advice Events designed to demystify complex financial topics and empower families with knowledge. Her commitment to this mission is evident in her upcoming event: Financial Literacy for the Next Generation, taking place in November at the London Children's Museum. Due to overwhelming interest, she's reserved the entire venue for the evening. For more information or to reserve your space, please email mel.smith@rbc.com

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Melanie's community commitment reveals her values. She prioritizes time with her husband Andrew and their two children, Bryden and Abby, and actively supports the London Children's Museum and serves on the Board of Acorn Christian Daycare.

Clients and community members work with Melanie because she delivers what matters most: clear financial guidance, accessible education and a genuine commitment to building a financially confident community.



A QUIET MOMENT IN A JOYFUL, BUSY SEASON

As November arrives, our thoughts turn toward the holidays: family traditions, sparkling lights and the pleasure of giving. Yet alongside the joy comes shopping lists, school concerts and extra responsibilities. For parents and caregivers, even a happy season can feel overwhelming.

Blaise Pascal wrote, "All the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber." His words invite us to reflect on how rarely we allow ourselves simply to be.

Research suggests that mindfulness, meditation and moments of stillness can ease anxiety, depression, reduce pain and improve sleep. A quiet and calm mind also allows us to think more clearly and creatively.

Stillness offers breathing room. You do not need to empty your mind or achieve perfect calm. With so many people needing our attention, these moments give us space

to notice our own feelings and needs, too. Caring for ourselves belongs within the circle of caregiving.

Try one of these moments of stillness:

- Follow your breath. Sit comfortably for two minutes and notice your natural breathing. When thoughts about responsibilities arrive, gently return to your next breath.



- Soften into a body scan. Allow your feet to rest flat on the ground, hands resting comfortably on your legs. Notice your feet, legs, shoulders and face. Relax your jaw, allow muscles to soften and just breathe.
- Savour an ordinary moment: the warmth of your mug, the sounds around you, the sight of something or someone that makes you smile. Give this moment your attention before reaching for your phone.
- Walk with awareness: notice your footsteps, the air and your surroundings. Mindfulness can include movement.
- Offer yourself kindness. Silently say, "May I meet this moment with kindness." You deserve the care you so readily give others.

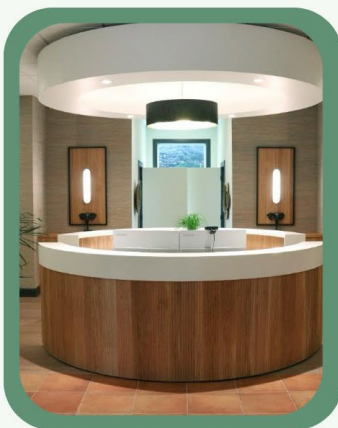
This holiday season, a quiet moment can be a small gift to yourself: permission to pause, breathe and enjoy what matters to you.

Dr. Kylea Potvin, Medical Oncologist and Founder, Eir Centre, 226-289-6644, Info@eirhealing.ca



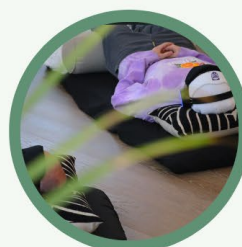
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- ✓ Yoga Therapy





The people you love
didn't all arrive at once.
A great plan provides for
each of them just the same.

TWO FAMILIES, ONE WILL

Blended families are increasingly common in Canada, and they bring estate planning challenges a simple will may not solve. Assets meant for children from a previous relationship can pass entirely to a surviving spouse — or to that spouse's children.

Start with what a will does not control. RRSPs, RRI's, TFSAs and life insurance pass directly to whomever you name as beneficiary, bypassing your estate.

The common approach is to leave everything to your spouse, and that can unintentionally disinherit your own children. If a surviving spouse later changes their will or remarries, children from the first marriage may receive nothing.

Three strategies are worth considering. A spousal trust lets a

surviving spouse use assets for life while ensuring they ultimately pass to your children, though it adds complexity and tax.

Dividing assets is simpler: some directly to your spouse, others to your children. But spouses may have legal rights to challenge a will, and registered assets carry tax consequences. Don't overlook heirlooms — sentimental value matters.

Life insurance can fund separate inheritances at once — often the simplest way to create estate value and reduce conflict.

Estate planning for a blended family is rarely straightforward. We'll work alongside your estate lawyer to build a plan that provides for your spouse and protects your children. Give us a call.

”

Leave everything to your spouse, and your own children may ultimately receive little or nothing.

KEEP IN MIND

- RRSPs, RRI's and TFSAs pass by beneficiary, not by will.
- Jointly owned property transfers the same way.
- Leaving all to a spouse can disinherit your children.
- A spousal trust protects your children's share.
- Life insurance can fund two inheritances at once.

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OUR MIND'S MAIN CHARACTER

Why is it that we can be so hard on ourselves sometimes? Self-criticism and “should” statements don’t actually motivate us, yet we tend to use these strategies as though they will. We tell ourselves we should have done better, known better, or simply been better. Somehow, we believe that being hard on ourselves will keep us from making the same mistake again.

Consider the message behind self-judgment and what it is trying to tell you. Often, underneath the criticism is something quite human: disappointment, sadness or a desire to simply do well. When we understand the emotion underneath the response, we can respond to what we really need, instead of adding another layer of negativity.

When I find myself feeling down about a mistake or something that didn’t go my way,

I catch myself and actively work to change my perspective. I ask, “what if this happened to a friend?” I might respond with, “it’s hard when things don’t work out the way we expect, but good for you for trying” or “I’m sorry you feel sad that it didn’t go your way.” I would offer them understanding and remind them that one difficult moment does not define them.

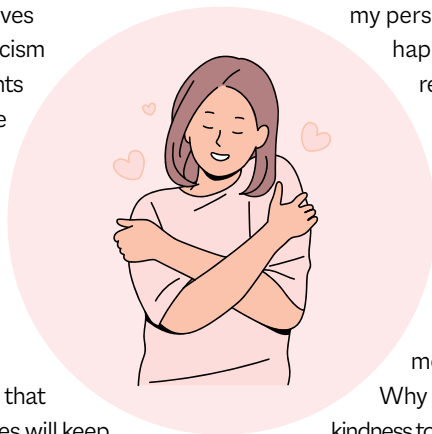
Why does it seem easier to offer kindness to someone else?

Having self-compassion means we can acknowledge when we could have done something differently while still speaking to ourselves with patience. There is a difference between learning from a mistake with grace and talking negatively to ourselves. One leaves room for growth, while the other keeps us stuck.

Jen Wall is a Registered Psychotherapist with Talk With Jen Counselling and Psychotherapy, a virtual practice based in London, Ontario, supporting caregivers and professionals in high-stress roles experiencing burnout and emotional overload. Learn more at TalkWithJen.ca.

Next time that voice within your mind says something negative, pause and challenge it. Ask yourself what you would say to someone you love, and try offering those same words to yourself. We can root for ourselves the way we root for others.

Disclaimer: this information is for educational purposes only and does not constitute psychotherapy or a therapeutic relationship.



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PLANNING YOUR HOLIDAY TREATMENTS

The holiday season has a way of filling every square on the calendar. Between school concerts, family gatherings and finding the perfect gift, making time for yourself can feel like one more thing on the list.

If an aesthetic treatment is part of your holiday plans, a little advance planning can make the experience more relaxed. The key is to work backwards from your event, leaving time for recovery and for results to develop. We encourage you to start with your goals and your calendar. Are you hoping to soften expression lines, address uneven skin tone or enjoy a refreshing facial? Different treatments call for different timelines.

BOTOX: think weeks, not days

Botox does not produce its final effect immediately. Planning at least two weeks ahead gives the treatment time to develop, but some results may take longer. The full results are expected at 30 days, so an earlier appointment can provide a more

comfortable cushion before an important occasion.

MICRONEEDLING AND BBL: leave breathing room

Consider discussing these treatments three to four weeks before your event. Microneedling can cause temporary redness and sensitivity, while BBL, or BroadBand Light, can temporarily darken treated pigment before it fades. This window is a planning buffer, rather than a promise of complete results. Your provider can recommend timing based on your skin, treatment intensity and whether a series is appropriate.

FACIALS: Closer to the celebration

A gentle, familiar hydrating facial may fit a few days before your event. Same-day treatment should be discussed with your provider, especially if makeup will follow. A new facial, strong exfoliation or extractions deserves more breathing room.

For busy parents, planning also means considering childcare, aftercare and any holiday travel. Tell your provider if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this can affect which treatments are appropriate.

Not sure where to begin? Book a consultation at Yazdani Aesthetics now. Together, we can create a treatment plan that fits your goals and your schedule.

You already plan so much for everyone else. This holiday season, give yourself a little extra space on your own calendar, too.



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THE INTERNET IS FOREVER

Validation, approval and acceptance matter to kids like golf handicaps, New Balance shoes, and only flipping a burger patty once matter to dads. It's always been this way. But our competition used to be the twenty-some-odd kids in our class. Now, kids measure themselves against likes, follows, shares and whatever else the internet has invented to keep score.

I didn't get invited to a lot of events as a kid, but unless I overheard playground conversations, I didn't know what I was missing. Kids now KNOW. There's usually video. And when attention is currency, being outrageous can turn into the vault full of gold coins Scrooge McDuck used to swim in.

I'm lucky. "No" has been a perfectly acceptable two-letter answer to social media access in our house.

Still, my kids watch streamers and MrBeast. The attention economy finds a way in. So we talk. About what they watch. About why phones have limits. About why home should be a safe place to land when the outside world gets loud.

They either pick up what I'm putting down or know how to nod and "uh-huh" until I lose momentum.

But rules are only part of it. Values are what we hope they'll reach for when we're not there to referee.

Be honest. Treat people well. Take responsibility. Know the difference between being

silly and being cruel. Your worth doesn't depend on an audience, and someone liking you isn't worth doing something you know is wrong.

Those lessons need practice, including watching us live them. We can't preach kindness and then humiliate someone for a laugh. I'm not a perfect parent. Not by a long shot. But I want my kids to know they can say no, walk away, or call me, even when they've already made a poor choice.

Someone will put your kid on the spot. Hopefully, it's eating a chocolate-covered cricket. It could be something dangerous, illegal or filmed at someone else's expense. And the internet is forever. We won't control every choice. But the conversations we have now can give them something solid to stand on when fitting in means stepping over a line.

Their favourite YouTuber is already talking to them. Let's make sure we are, too.



.....
 Jeremy McCall is a married father of three, a social services case manager, and known as "The Dadfather", being the founder and Past President of Dad Club London.

THE NEXT STAGE OF MOTHERHOOD

For all of my adult life, I have been Mom. Not just a mom in the ordinary sense, either. I have been a teen mom, a special needs mom, caregiver, advocate, nurse, appointment keeper, medication giver and the person who learned to function with one eye open at night.

My adult son has complex medical needs and requires a level of care most people will never understand. For years, my life has revolved around keeping him safe, comfortable and here. There was never much opportunity to wonder what I would do when my children grew up because one of my children would always need me.

Then there is my youngest, born when I

was in my 30s. My teenager. The one who is suddenly not so little anymore and has vowed that his future includes serving our country in the Canadian Armed Forces. And I am incredibly proud of him. But somewhere underneath that pride is a mother quietly thinking, "Wait. You're leaving too?"

I raised four children. I have spent decades putting someone else's needs ahead of mine. And despite all the things I have done, built, survived and accomplished, being their mom is still the thing I believe I have been best at.

So what happens when the house gets quieter? What happens when one child is building his own life and another chapter of complex caregiving eventually changes or ends? Who am I? That question scares me more than I like to admit.

Maybe the next stage of motherhood isn't about becoming unnecessary. Maybe it is about learning to be needed differently. And perhaps the empty nest isn't actually

empty. Maybe it is simply space. Space for our children to become who they were meant to be, and for us mothers to finally discover who we are beyond the lunches, hospital rooms, school pickups, sleepless nights and endless worrying.

I don't know exactly who that woman is yet. But I'm learning and growing every day and I'm excited to finally meet her.



Meda Riley is a Mother, Palliative Complex Caregiver and Founder of Country Girl Body Products and Country Girl Catering and Preserves.

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W-SITTING, TOE WALKING & IN-TOEING

As children grow and learn to move, their posture and walking patterns don't always look the way we expect. You may notice your child sitting in a "W," walking with their toes turned inward or spending time walking on their tiptoes. While these can catch a parent's attention, they don't necessarily mean something is wrong.

W-SITTING

W-sitting is when a child sits on their bottom with their knees bent and their feet positioned outside their hips, forming a "W" with their legs. For many children, this is simply a comfortable and stable way to sit.

Rather than constantly correcting W-sitting, encourage your child to use a variety of positions during play, such as sitting cross-legged, with their legs straight in front or side-sitting. If your child almost exclusively W-sits or has difficulty comfortably sitting in other positions, it may be worth mentioning to their healthcare provider.

IN-TOEING

In-toeing describes walking with one or both feet turned inward. It can come

from the foot, lower leg or hip and is quite common during childhood.

In many cases, in-toeing improves naturally as a child grows. Children with increased inward rotation at the hips may also prefer W-sitting, which is why the two are often seen together. If in-toeing is painful, significantly different between sides, worsening or interfering with your child's ability to walk and play, consider having it assessed.

TOE WALKING

It is not unusual to see occasional toe walking when children are learning to walk. However, if your child consistently walks on their toes, cannot comfortably bring their heels to the floor or continues toe walking as they get older, it is worth discussing with a healthcare professional.

Toe walking can occur for several reasons, and sometimes there is no specific underlying cause. Treatment, when needed, depends on the individual child and may include monitoring, therapy, stretching, casting or orthotic treatment.

WHEN SHOULD YOU ASK FOR HELP?

Children develop at different rates, and there is a wide range of normal when it comes to movement. Consider asking for an assessment if you notice pain, significant asymmetry, stiffness, a sudden change in walking, frequent falls that interfere with daily activities, or concerns about your child's overall motor development.

Most importantly, you don't need to diagnose your child yourself. If something about the way they sit, stand or walk has you wondering, bring it up with their healthcare provider. Often, reassurance and a little time are all that's needed.



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PERMISSION TO KEEP DINNER SIMPLE

Imagine this...It's 5:30 pm. Everyone is hungry, you're tired after a long day at work, and someone inevitably asks the question you've been trying not to think about all afternoon...“What's for dinner?”

So, here's your reminder: Dinner does not need to be complicated to be nutritious. It doesn't need to be made entirely from scratch or contain a dozen ingredients. And it definitely doesn't need to look like something you'd see on Instagram.

Think of the meal as components, not recipes. When you don't have the time or energy to follow a recipe, aim to include a source of protein, a vegetable or fruit, and a source of carbohydrate. Add some healthy fat and flavour, and you have the foundation of a balanced meal. And remember... not every meal needs to check every nutrition box perfectly. What we eat over days and weeks

matters much more than whether Tuesday night's dinner was perfectly balanced.

Convenience foods are allowed! Rotisserie chicken, frozen vegetables, bagged salads, canned beans, jarred pasta sauce, pre-cooked grains and frozen fish can make feeding your family significantly easier. Convenience foods aren't a failure you need to feel guilty about. They are incredibly useful tools.

- A rotisserie chicken with a bagged salad and a whole-grain roll is dinner.
- Scrambled eggs, toast and some cut-up fruit is dinner.
- Pasta with jarred tomato sauce, frozen vegetables and pre-cooked chicken is dinner.
- A quesadilla with black beans, cheese, salsa and some vegetables or fruit on the side is dinner.

Give yourself grace! Food is important and nutrition matters. But so does your time, energy and sanity. Some nights you'll assemble. Some nights you'll reheat leftovers. And yes, sometimes you'll order pizza.

- Are you ordering pizza this week? Add some cut-up vegetables or a salad.
- Having boxed macaroni and cheese? Add frozen peas and serve it with fruit.
- Heating up chicken nuggets? Add some cucumber, carrots and a whole-grain pita.

Give yourself permission to make feeding your family a little easier. Because the best family meal isn't the most elaborate one. Sometimes, the best dinner is simply the one that gets everyone fed.

.....
Jenn Giurgevich is the founder of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business. Visit www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca for more information.



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