



Feel like a

# ROCKSTAR PARENT,

even through challenging behaviours!

5 simple steps you can take to feel better TODAY about raising children with diverse abilities and challenging behaviours

Pivot Point Mental Health Team



# **Feel like a ROCKSTAR PARENT, even through challenging behaviours!**

**(5 simple steps you can take to feel better  
TODAY about raising children with diverse  
abilities and challenging behaviours)**

We love our children, but... parenting can be hard! Even more so when your child has special emotional needs, behaviour issues, or other ongoing challenges that can drain any parent's sense of optimism that today will be a good day. Whether it's their temper tantrums and screaming, or managing constant bickering and fighting between siblings, or defending your child for getting kicked out of school (again), or your child refusing to do the simplest of chores, children can exhaust their parents' patience and resilience... sometimes to the core!



When it's like this day in and day out, it can create feelings of overwhelm for parents; and many of us have felt we've lost our edge, or our focus from time to time. This can make space for feelings of failure and a growing sense of uncertainty about how to change things back to being better again. Traditional parenting approaches often don't work, family and friends don't always understand or accept the reality for our family... and the outside world grows further and further removed. For some parents, each day may have long bouts of panic or fear as we worry about how we're going to survive all the years ahead. The once sunshine lit path into our future, starts to become dark, cloudy and lonely.





Although most parents feel alone in their journey from time to time, when life starts to feel like drudgery day after day, and in the overwhelm you've lost sight of the strategies and plans that lead to your family dreams in the first place... it's time to make some small changes.

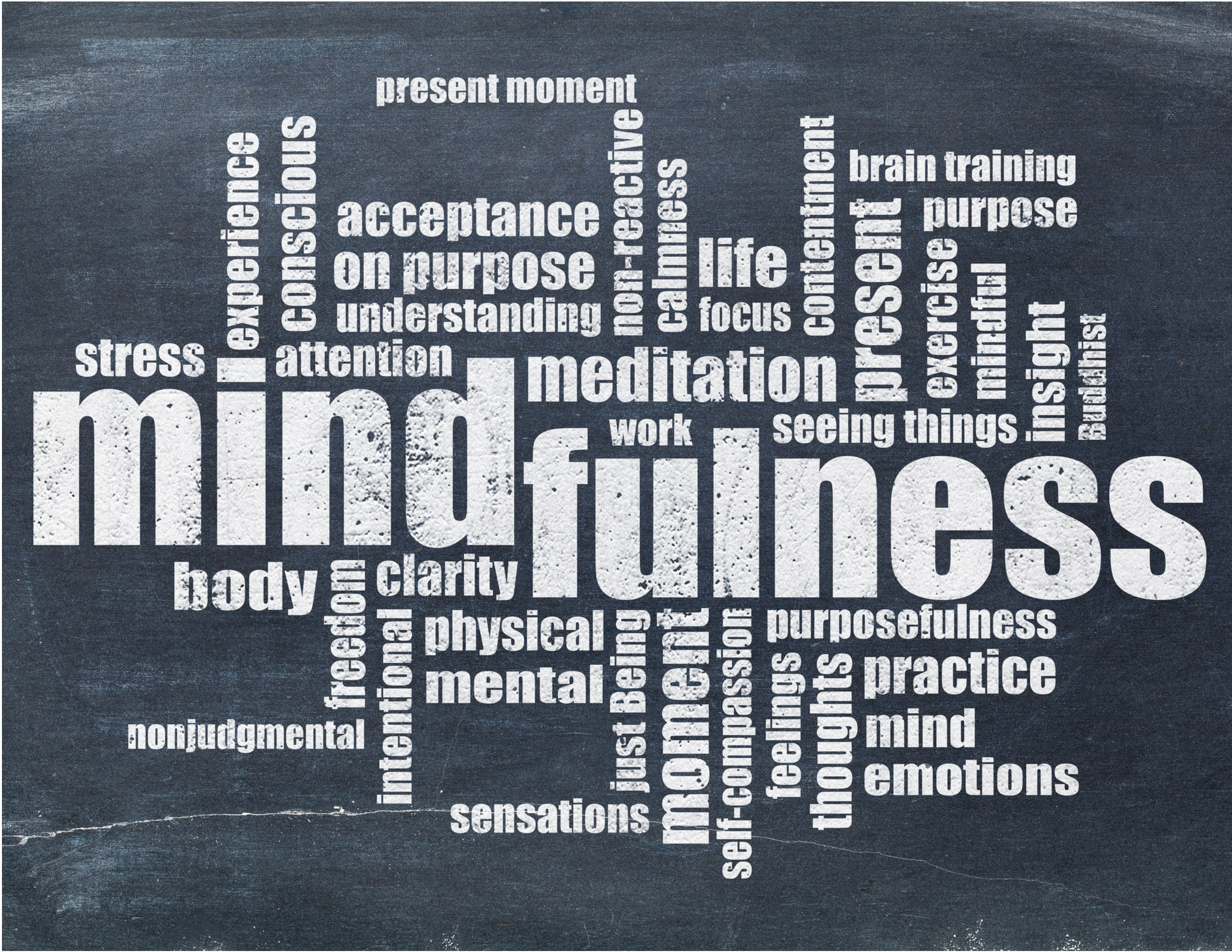
Pivot Point was created for you! We started the agency in 2003 so that parents throughout BC could find Counsellors and other service providers who truly understand the struggles of raising children in today's complex world. Each of our Counsellors is deeply committed to helping parents feel safe and validated in their struggles: Whether in-person or online through video conference, each Counsellor is here to help parents, teens, couples and families find their own unique 'shift'... the specific turning point that they need to get back on track towards living a more positive and successful life again.



Here are a few ways to start rebuilding your resources right now, to set the stage for your support network, and help you find your way back on track to feeling optimistic and strong again:

1. Rebuild your self-care:

In spite of all of the love and effort we put into our families, many of us as parents are the last ones to get our own needs met. Self-care is about recognizing that you can't give your best if you're not feeling 'at your best'... and to be at your best, your needs must be met too!





a. Start with you! Remember that YOU matter and that helping yourself get stronger means you can be stronger for your family... everyone wins!

b. Select some practical strategies that work for you:

i. Write and read your “I matter” affirmations or journal to yourself about your positive qualities, or enjoy a good book.

ii. Dedicate time for yourself (time for sleep and healthy food; time for love and friendships; time for hobbies and interests outside of raising great kids). Your entire world is not defined solely by your role as a parent! Your time might be in the quiet of the early mornings or late evenings when everyone is asleep; or you might find time driving back from school drop-off or when you're on your way to work each day. Just look for a few minutes several times each week where you can focus on yourself again.

iii. Remind yourself of all you are!... of all you've been... and of all you have yet to become!

Remembering and believing in the fullness of your life is central to creating that SENSE of fullness in your life!



c. Our counsellors will help you pay attention to an important shift in your feelings; it's that subtle shift away from focusing on the struggles, and towards looking inward again. It's about remembering and learning to like parts of what you see and feel inside. Gently rebuild that sense of self, your fondness for your special qualities, and your courage to get up and move yourself out of the harsh feelings you've been wrestling with. You can plant seeds in the garden of your soul... today, and a few more every day, until you feel them blossoming and beaming inside again.

d. This won't fix everything, nor make all of your struggles go away.

But within these brief moments each day, you can choose to stoke the fire within. You can choose to gently build your courage and confidence, one small step at a time.

## **2. Widen your circle of support:**

Recognize that, while the isolation from others can serve to protect you from their judgements, it also cuts you off from their support. Building healthy and supportive relationships is a lot like staying in shape physically: It takes a little effort, regularly.



a. Actively reach out to friends and family members. Send some emails or text messages letting people know you're thinking about them. Even if they can't respond right now, your regular efforts to reconnect might invite key people back into your life... for some fun, for some support, for some new ideas, and to share new experiences.



b. Look for experienced and compassionate professionals who understand your family's unique needs. Not every professional who works with kids will 'get' YOUR kids, or your family. But some will. Find those ones... the professionals that can understand and affirm what you are feeling, and who seem to have clear strategies to help you find your way through. It's okay to honour your sense of what feels right for you. Even when selecting



a Counsellor or service provider from Pivot Point, make sure you find someone who feels like the right fit for you! Recognize that you will likely need different things from professionals at different times. That's okay too. Call on them for what you need, and ask for their support to help you move forward in the area that's most important to you right now.

c. At this stage, notice the feelings that remind you that you are not alone. Be brave, share openly with others, cry if you need to... and invite those who are close to you to become part of your safety net; part of your foundation. You are in this together, united with your friends, family, and some well chosen professionals... you'll find your way through!

### **3. Create a plan:**

Planning doesn't not be exhaustive; it just needs to be very meaningful to you and to what you want for your family. Some parents keep their plan on the fridge, while others prefer to review them regularly at their bedside table or desk. What matters is that you have a relevant plan that brings you back into focus on days where things feel blurry.



a. Work with professionals, and bounce ideas off of your friends and family, till you have created a plan that makes sense to YOU and feels right for YOU and your family.

b. It doesn't need to be overly complicated, nor does it need to answer every question. But a basic and sound plan that will move you forward into a series of small action steps over the next three months will make a profound difference in how you feel over those months!





c. Your plan should include:

i. Some clear statements of the top 3 or 5 hopes and dreams you have for your family. These are the things worth working towards! Ideally, they will be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time specific)

ii. Clear tasks and specific strategies that others on your team will be able to follow to help bring your family, step by step, closer to your goals.

iii. Ways to observe (and sometimes count or measure) the changes you are hoping to see. What do you want to see more of? What do you hope will fade or disappear entirely? And how are these indicators related to your goals or dreams?

iv. Specific reinforcers and rewards, for everyone in your family, for pulling together and working towards your family's goals. These can be small and simple treats or gestures that keep each person in the family aware of the plan and motivated to remain an active part of the team.



v. Include strategic time and activities for yourself in your plan... time to reconnect with key others, like joining a facebook group, scheduling time to read more blogs from good sites, or participating in social media that leaves you feeling empowered, connected, and better informed.

d. Here, you are looking for a small sense of confidence again; the feeling that you know what you're going to do or try next, for the coming month or two. This is a magical antidote to uncertainty, apathy and overwhelm.... When you feel like you've tried everything else, knowing you've got "something" new to try, means you're no longer stuck!

e. A good Counsellor by your side can give you fresh ideas, help you overcome some of the emotional barriers that stand in your way, as well as help increase your courage to put those plans into action.



#### 4. Put your plan into action:

Having re-built some courage, strengthened your support network, and built a plan... it's now time to start taking regular steps forward again. The purpose of the plan was to give clarity and focus, and to inspire ACTION!



a. Slowly start to take action steps to make your plan happen. Do a little bit each day. Checklists and calendars that give you a visual reminder of what needs to be done, as well as a sense of accomplishment from checking them off the list, are often helpful.



b. Make sure your plan includes self-care, time to build your relationships, and time to connect with professionals to review and revise your plan.

c. Remember that it's not the destination that matters most right now... it's your regular actions and small steps forward. So stay focused on your sense of consistency, and on your sense of accomplishment from following through with little actions each day.

d. The feeling you are looking for here is one of gentle progression. YOU wanted things to change; YOU dreamed of things being better for yourself and your family; YOU created this plan... and YOU are making it happen, one small step at a time! Don't be afraid to reach out even more to your friends, family, and professionals if you sense the return of panic, overwhelm, and uncertainty. They all want you to feel like you're winning again!



## 5. Build momentum:

Momentum comes partly from consistency; regularly taking the small and important actions that are laid out in your plan. Yet you will also feel momentum by going back and retracing your steps from 1 to 5 regularly.



a. Try to build momentum by doing small things each day that are part of your plan. Make sure each day ends with a review of the dreams you are chasing, as well as a quick update of the tasks planned for tomorrow. Update your task list or calendar, adding some fun and easy items that you know you'll be able to complete the next day, so that you are setting yourself up for success.



b. Monitor your feelings: Pick a day each month (like the day of the month you were born on) as your check-in day where you take stock of how you're doing. This is where your journals from the past become golden because they help you see how far you've come! In your self check-in, either contrast how you feel now (and celebrate your progress!), or be willing to admit that you might not yet have reached your goals. That's okay... reset and restart at the beginning again, and rebuild yourself once more.

c. Sharpen your plan regularly: Schedule quarterly reviews of your plan with key friends or professionals; invite feedback from others, and let your plan slowly grow. Add more goals, more dreams, more people participating, more clear tasks and let a larger sense of accomplishment emerge.

~~~~~ You are on your way!!! ~~~~~



Raising children can be one of the most challenging experiences of an adult's life...but it can also be the most rewarding! For many, this can become significantly harder when emotional, behavioural, and/or developmental challenges shift how your family functions, and how successful you feel as a parent.

Many parents feel like they lose their way from time to time... and where their former self-confidence and relaxed optimism about raising a family has gradually been replaced with feelings of panic, overwhelm, and nagging uncertainty about today and the future that lies ahead.

Remember that the key to success lies within you! Learning to shift your focus, by taking good care of yourself, building friendships, inviting professionals into the mix, and slowly beginning to take action can move you back to where you need to be... back to being the Rockstar Parent you know you are meant to be!





In this book you've received 5 tips to help you take steps TODAY to help you become the Rockstar Parent you've always wanted to be. If you would like further support in this journey, we encourage you to join our Facebook group by clicking the button below, you can join other parents and professionals who share similar struggles and strategies for success.

# Click Here



**Join The Group**



**~ Pivot Point Mental Health team.**

Pivot Point offers a wide range of Counselling and Mental Health services for teens and adults, as well as for couples and families throughout BC. We specialize in live on-line counselling, as well as in-home (or in-office) sessions. With our specialty in the emotional, behavioural, and relational conditions of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, our experienced Counsellors and Neurofeedback trainers help bring hope and stability back into turbulent lives.

If you would like to explore 1 on 1 support, please book a free 15 minute consultation call with one of our Counsellors. Simply complete the first few fields on our form to tell us how and when to reach you!  
[pivotpoint.ca/explore-counselling](https://pivotpoint.ca/explore-counselling)