

Light in the Dark

Bringing your feelings into the light so you can learn to heal

This resource is for parents whose children are currently not living with them

Emotional pain is like carrying a heavy weight. You may want the weight to be lifted or fear it will be with you forever. Feeling like this for a long time stresses the body. Understanding the early warning signs of stress allows you to take charge of your life.

Small things can trigger big reactions

- You get stressed over lost keys or running late
- You have trouble sleeping

You are in the emotional 'early warning' zone

- You may say and do things you regret
- You may have conflict with other people

Things related to your child will trigger big reactions

- Family Time* / Contact is cancelled at short notice or goes badly
- You feel grief and pain rising to the surface

You are entering the emotional 'amber' zone

- You may feel distress, panic or numbing
- People may think you are being unreasonable

You are feeling calm and positive

- You can cope with everyday upsets

You are in the emotional 'green' zone

- You enjoy today and feel optimistic about tomorrow

* Family Time is the preferred term for the meetings or communication between children in care and their parents

Depleted energy

Stress build-up

Calm state

Ready to explode

Things that reignite your pain can be overwhelming

- It might be Mother's/Father's Day or your child's birthday
- You feel the weight of anger, shame and fear return

You have entered the emotional 'red zone'

- Your reactions become unpredictable
- Your actions may frighten you and other people

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Powering the healing journey

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Healing
is a journey
not a
destination.

What you can do for yourself today:

- ☀ Spend time with people who understand your pain
- ☀ Spend time in nature to feel calm and connected
- ☀ Do small, good things for yourself (eat a nourishing meal, listen to your favourite song)
- ☀ Notice even the small moments when you feel strong and resilient

Wherever you are today, you can take steps today to start your journey and get the support you deserve.

Parents can feel like they are always waiting for something:

- ☀ for court dates
- ☀ for support services
- ☀ to see their child
- ☀ to possibly bring their child home



It is not a sign of weakness to need to work on your emotional self. It takes a lot of strength to do this and to ask for help.

What you can learn about yourself today:

- ☀ What do you notice about yourself when you feel calm and connected?
- ☀ What do others notice about you when you seem calm and connected?
- ☀ What piece of advice have you been given that really meant something?
- ☀ What small step can you take now that would change your situation?