

# 14 Top Tips

We all know that there's no manual for being a parent. Much less a guide on being a parent to a child with profound disabilities and multiple learning needs. And not so much as a memo on being a parent to said child during a global pandemic.

Which isn't to say that there isn't a wealth of material out there telling you how to cope, what to do, what not to do, which groups to join, which websites to follow, which platforms to use, and generally how to run your new life.

It's overwhelming.

We're ALL overwhelmed.

But we are all also, somehow, making it through the days. In our own ways, with our own strategies, with our own highs and lows, and with our own successes and failures.

Here are some 'top tips' for coping at home which we've gathered together from families with vulnerable children/adults.



Some may work for you, some won't. Remember that ultimately YOU know what helps YOU to cope, regardless of what everyone else is saying. Whether that's making lists or tearing them up, cleaning out cupboards or giving in to complete chaos, controlling screen time or abandoning all limits – it doesn't matter. If it helps you cope, do it.



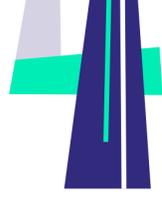
Stick to 'normal' routines – get up, get dressed, have breakfast etc at usual times. Cling to the elements of 'normality' you can.



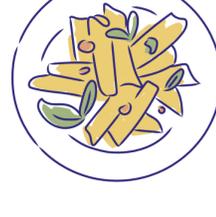
Limit watching of news to once a day. See what's new on Netflix?



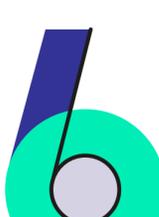
Take time in every day to do one thing you enjoy.



Don't forget to eat! Taking care of yourself is as important as taking care of everyone else in your house.



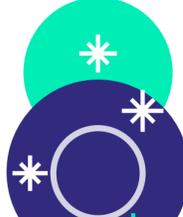
Play music that lifts you and play it loud! It's free and it's a great tonic (as are dancing and singing!)



Get some fresh air every day. Maybe take up gardening?



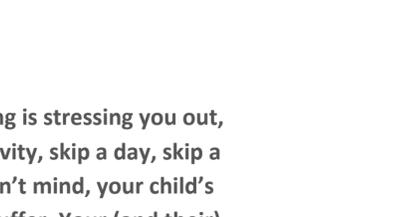
Don't feel you need to join every Whatsapp, FB, Zoom etc group you get invited to. It's okay to say no. Turn off notifications if they stress you out.



Be willing to ask for help and be willing to accept it if it's offered. You may not feel like someone who should be listed as 'vulnerable' but your child is and that means you and your family are too. If using that status helps you get help, use it!

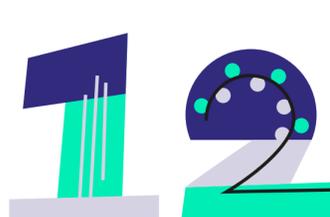
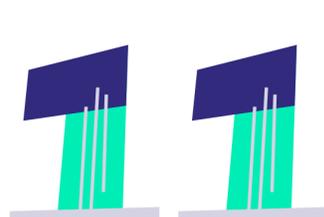


If the home-schooling is stressing you out, leave it. Skip an activity, skip a day, skip a week. Teachers won't mind, your child's education will not suffer. Your (and their) mental health are more important than anything you will ever find on Google classroom.



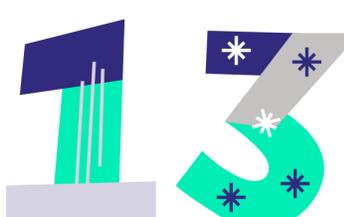
Pick your battles: speaks for itself. There will be many battles in the weeks ahead – some small, some huge. Don't waste energy or emotion on the ones that simply don't matter.

If you're struggling to meet the needs of several children, try an alternate day approach – focus on one child's needs each day and let the other (s) have a day 'off'. This can help you feel more in control and less frustrated!



If you need help with deliveries/basic supplies, look for a local support group by searching your town name + Covid-19 support in Facebook.

Trial and error – we are all muddling through the days however we can. Trying something, changing it, abandoning it, trying again, will all be part of the process.



Abandon 'should' – this isn't the time to feel you 'should' do anything other than try to stay safe and healthy. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.