

Episode 9: Supporting Emotional Regulation with Art with Jocelyn Fitzgerald

Christy Keating 00:08

Hi friends and welcome to the Heartful Parent Podcast. I'm your host, Christy Keating. In this podcast, we talk about it all, our parenting, our partnering beyond our professional lives, because they are all a part of us. And we were never meant to do this alone

Christy Keating 00:36

Hello parents and welcome back to another episode of The Heartful Parent Podcast. This week, I'm really excited to introduce you to Jocelyn Fitzgerald. Jocelyn is a licensed psychotherapist, a licensed Marriage and Family therapist. And she started her career in the California Bay area, where she started working with teens and focusing on self harming behaviors. From there, she moved to Indiana where she not only taught at the college level, and ran a successful private practice. She also spent considerable time working with Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. After Indiana, she made her way to the wonderful state of Washington, my home state as well. And she now lives in Vancouver, Washington, which is right on the border of Washington and Oregon, where she started working for a group private practice and was able to work with trauma over a wide range of ages. It was during that time in that group practice that she discovered her love of working with refugees. And her affinity for a tool called EMDR. She quickly realized how powerful EMDR was and continued her education to become EMDR certified.

One of her proudest moments was actually going to Africa back in the summer of 2018. And working in a refugee camp, where she was able to marry her love of art therapy and EMDR. And to see the profound effects that it had on the teens in that refugee camp. Now when she's not working in her private practice, she loves to be out and hiking in the beautiful mountains of the Pacific Northwest, creating art, doing yoga and having dance parties with her family. I love that because I also love to have dance parties with my family, specifically kitchen dance parties.

But I am really excited about this conversation today. Because it's, first of all, it's something that I have not spoken a lot about with other experts. So I learned a lot in this conversation about how art and mindfulness can really benefit our kids in this conversation. Jocelyn talks about the brain research and what they've seen in terms of blood flow to the prefrontal cortex, when kids or adults are engaged in a creative practice, and how that can be a really integral part of teaching kids emotional regulation, you know, helping them get into their bodies and be more mindful and more creative and better problem solvers. Which, I mean, let's be honest, wouldn't we all love our kids to be more mindful, creative and better problem solvers. Frankly, I think most of us as adults could benefit from that. So we dig into that in this conversation.



And we do also talk about what EMDR is, and how it can be appropriate and beneficial in some contexts when a therapeutic intervention is needed. I think this conversation just opens up new possibilities for the ways that we engage and interact with our kids, and the ways that we help them learn to regulate. So sit back and enjoy and learn right along with me. Welcome, Jocelyn. I'm so excited to have you here and to touch on this really different and kind of unique, I guess, approach to helping our children regulate something we've never talked about before here. So I'm excited to have you welcome.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 04:16

Thank you for having me. I'm excited to talk about this.

Christy Keating 04:21

I want to dig right in. You know, I've got your book called *Colorful Place, Mindful Story and Art for Kids*. It's absolutely beautiful. But I'd love to back up and find out. How did you really get started as an art therapist, and what is art therapy?

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 04:37

Yes, thank you. I kind of happened upon it like I probably a lot of our therapists do. And I loved art and I found it so therapeutic as a teenager who was going through a lot of teenage angst and frustration and anger. Art was kind of my saving grace like I would turn to art in those really dark moments and always felt better after just spending time playing in color and and creating. And I didn't I didn't realize until I was in college when I watched a documentary about an art therapist from Rochester, New York that I could do both helping people was an option and doing art together was an option. He was doing art with. He worked with schizophrenic patients, and he helped them express their feelings through art. And I was teaching as a college student, I was just teaching these autistic men painting.

And I recognized that when we were painting together that like conversation just flowed more easily, they were more relaxed, there was more eye contact, there was more laughter. And I kind of realized that pretty early on that art was a way to help people regulate and calm their nervous systems. And then I just kept going with the arts, studied Fine Art undergrad, and then went on to grad school and studied. I have a master's in marriage and family therapy and art therapy. And I really like I kind of joke, I can't even imagine working with teens working with kids without the creative arts, because it's just such a wonderful way into what's going on underneath the surface that they often don't have words for or don't recognize. And the art really helps open them up to what's going on.

Christy Keating 06:17

I actually dabble a little bit, and I'm not, I would not call myself an artist, but I actually dabbled just a little bit in, like mixed media art, and it is really calming. So it's, I love that you took the love of that, and moved it into also working with, you know, with the families or with the children that you that you do work with.



Jocelyn Fitzgerald 06:40

And we're really recognizing now with neuroscience and the way we're, we're studying art with fMRI. So they're studying the blood flow to the frontal cortex of the brain. They recently did a study at Drexel University where they just had participants, some that practice art and a lot that didn't, they had them just doing three exercises each for about 10 minutes. And one was a mandala. One was a free drawing, and one was the doodle. And all the participants had more blood flow to the frontal cortex, which is the area of our brain where we can make decisions, and we can think they all had more blood flow, they all felt like they were more able to solve problems, which I think is really important for kids and for parents to recognize that that creative piece helps you to have a new perspective. And then they all reported feeling more relaxed and wanting more than 10 minutes to do art, which I kind of was like, Gosh, I wish more schools knew about this. Because before testing, why don't we just have kids Doodle for 10 minutes before they go into take a test and just to relax their nervous system? Oh, Mike, oh, wouldn't that be amazing, amazing.

Christy Keating 07:48

I mean, and not just from I mean, kids enjoy doing art, I find that, like with my own children, they are much more uninhibited with it. Like they're much more willing to make mistakes, and to get messy and do all of those things, then many of us are as adults, because our you know, inner critic kind of comes into place, if we not only gave them something that they enjoy doing before they take a test, which they probably don't enjoy as much. But then also the research that you just cited is fascinating.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 08:18

Isn't that amazing? Yeah.

Christy Keating 08:22

Yeah. So, so important. And and probably, as you know, I work with parents all the time. And that is something I had never heard before that not just is it a fun, you know, fun activity, or a creative activity, but that it actually increases blood flow and sort of at least one's perception of your ability to solve problems, right?

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 08:43

Yeah, I do. I just did this the other day and exercise where I have all these whole printers in different sizes. And I had people go through magazines and pull out images that they were drawn to and then punched the hole like these big kind of one inch circles. And then I had them just spend a few minutes writing writing words or writing reflections on the images. And then I asked them to go deeper. And what, how does this How did these images reflect your life, and I was like blown away with what they came up with. Almost 100% people were like, I have like all these things that are connecting these frustrations. And I as a therapist would never in a million years have thought of them those solutions for their problems. They came up with them. And that was empowering for them as young people to recognize that they have the ability to to solve problems by just creatively thinking seeing colors and patterns.



Christy Keating 09:39

What I certainly see as a coach that when my clients come up with the solutions themselves, as opposed to me saying, you know, try X, Y or Z that oftentimes those are so the solutions that work or stick or really end up being impactful for them. I know I agree. So Obviously, you took this love of art and you moved it into our you connected it with your your background and training as a therapist. How did you like what caused you to decide to write this fantastic book Colorful Place? Which, you know, I know for those present, we have parents with a variety of age kiddos. This one is targeted, I think a little bit more towards the younger age set. What, what led to you deciding to write a book about this and not just combining, you know, the therapy background that you have, but actual mindfulness practice, which maybe you can talk about that just a little bit with this arm therapy or using art as a way of helping kids regulate?

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 10:43

Yeah, so I have a son, and he was in the fourth grade. And I started asking if I could go into his class to volunteer and do art, because they didn't they have a very limited program in the public school here in Vancouver. And the teacher said, Yes, come in. And then I was like, what if we did if I wrote some little scripts, and we could do like, a few minutes of kind of a guided visualization, and then I would create an art directive that reflected that visualization. So I started really small and mighty guided visualizations were like, a minute, maybe two minutes. And then each month, I would go and I would make them longer. And by the end, we were doing like full like 1015 minute guided visualizations. And they loved it. And I could see how quickly they started to relax, the fidgeting, slowed down, the breathing, slowed. And then the art just really kind of enhanced the whole meditation, mindfulness experience. And they all would would take their heart art home and share with the rest of their family, like, look what I'm working on with Miss Jocelyn. And then like my very last art day, there was like, the next day, it was the pandemic hit, and everything shut down.

My son was, we were attempting to homeschool, which was really hard. And my friend who was a behaviorist in the school, we were sharing ideas. I had gone to her classroom to see how she worked. And we were kind of both playing off the ideas of mindfulness and art. We had also done together, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction training, which is Jon Kabat Zinn. He's like kind of the founder of Western meditation. He's a doctor, he brought it to hospitals on the east coast. So we did that training. And then we started talking about how we were overwhelmed with people wanting to get in, I had so many people wanting to get in for therapy for their kids, you know, that the isolation was hitting and the frustrations of homeschool were hitting.

And I felt horrible, because I couldn't even find people to refer these families to I was like I am swamped. And I don't know anybody else that has openings right now. And I was meanwhile, talking to my friend Heather, who wrote the book. And she was like, struggling to do her lessons online with kids and recognizing that they were struggling, to sit still and to stay focused. And so we both were like we should write this book, this is the time to do it. And I think we recently went away for a weekend



together. And I was like Heather, that really was like, for me, so therapeutic during the pandemic to have this project with her. And so I got to do all the illustrations, and we just really collaborated on like, what's the most important things to teach here? And then what are some simple art directives that can just enhance that, that meditation or that visualization that we gave to them, gave to them in the book.

Christy Keating 13:35

I love that, that I mean, so many things we didn't want to have happened came out of the pandemic, but the fact that you and this friend of yours, Heather, were able to create something out of that, that helps families because I know a lot of you know, I was also running into that families needing therapeutic support, and it wasn't available. You know, obviously we are, I don't want to say we're on the other side of the pandemic, but we have, you know, normal life has, for better or for worse, resumed and we've kind of jumped back into the world, and are behaving as if we are on the other side of the pandemic, although, you know, we know it's still out there. But we still see kids, you know, kids being dysregulated are is not unique to being in a pandemic, it's feeling isolated is not unique to being in a pandemic. So for those, you know, listening, what are some ways that parents can take, you know, everything that you've shared so far about art therapy, and the increased brain flow when kids are using their creativity? How can parents bring that into their daily world with the kids that they are raising, you know, into adulthood and you're dealing with all those same issues, you know, dysregulation isolation, sadness.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 14:58

What's the one thing that I love this one, my favorite discoveries is this concept which you guys probably talk about of neuroplasticity. And that the recognition that our brains are able to change throughout our lifespan, right, we used to think they stopped developing in the early 20s. Now we know they can continue to change over time. And mindfulness is such a powerful way, even just 1015 minutes of meditation a day can change the way we regulate the way we respond. And so like, first things I would say to parents is for parents to practice that and even I know parents are so busy, but even like, just walking, consciously walking slower, or taking a minute, like when you wash your hands to do like four or five deep abdominal breaths into your belly, into your back into your sides. Those are just simple things. Because I think if we're regulating as parents, we can also help our kids regulate better. And then I love the idea of families having like a little designated place in their house, where they can do art, where they can set up coloring stations or creating mandalas. And some, you know, I know some people maybe don't have space, so just having a little plastic bucket or basket where you put all the art supplies. So you can pull that out and work on the kitchen table. Even if you just have five minutes before you're running off to do the next thing and just dropping into that kind of calm, meditative state can be so helpful.

Christy Keating 16:33

You know what the thing I love the most about what you just said is that it's we've been talking about this, and obviously, this is a book that's really, you know, meant to be read to children. And I mean, the pictures are colorful, and that sort of mindfulness practices are, are designed for an adult to read to or



with a child. But what you said that really kind of struck me is that we're also doing it for ourselves. Yeah, right, that when we're regulating, it kind of goes both ways. When we're regulating them, we are by definition, also regulating ourselves. If we can regulate ourselves, first, it makes it easier to help them learn to regulate.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 17:14

I know that old adage, you know, if you're on the airplane, you put your mask on first, it's like if you're passed out because of lack of oxygen, you're not going to help anyone, and just how important that is to really model that to our kids, like we have to regulate first and then we can help them.

Christy Keating 17:30

I mean, it is an old adage, but it but it is so so true. And it's one of those things I think many of us as parents struggle with, because we think that we have to do do do for our children, we forgot that we've got to do to do for ourselves first. Okay, so I love the idea of many parents probably have this without even realizing they have it, you know, a little spot where they keep their art supplies, or a whole space where they keep their art supplies. I know we've got some stored, like in the kitchen so that when my husband and I are preparing dinner, my little one will sit down and just color and talk to us as she does, as she does that. So it may be one of those things that's happening happening naturally for many families. But do you recommend that parents sort of do it more intentionally? And if so? How often? And are there are there any guidelines that you suggest to those two parents if they're really trying to use this, not just as a way to keep a kid busy, but also as a way to help with that regulation piece.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 18:43

I mean, I would, I would love for all people to be doing art and creating. But I also recognize that people are really busy. And so it's kind of like exercise, like, find what you love and do more of it. Because we all need to exercise, right. And I kind of think of creativity as similar to exercise in that it just is so feeding and nourishing for us, which is so designed to be creative. And I think art therapists recognize that art therapy is a pretty loose term like, it can be decorating a cake, like I've done with kids who maybe are not as comfortable with drawing with pencils, I've brought in cake supplies and been like, let's create a cake that just celebrates you and create whatever you want.

I have a ton of art supplies for cakes, like all sorts of decorating tools, and they love it. And then some for some people too, it's like collage feels really safe and really simple. And even just tearing images can be a great way to get started. So I'm like, of course I would love for people to have like a you know, like their exercise routine, like five minutes a day where they can just practice some form of art. But as a realist, I also recognize that people are really busy and sometimes five minutes can feel really hard. I do find for myself I'm also really comfortable with the arts. That if I have a couple of days without doing art, I feel often I miss it.



Christy Keating 20:03

Yeah, so a regular creative practice. And it sounds like something that would be beneficial for Well, we know it's beneficial for our children, also beneficial for us, even if we're uncomfortable with it as a way of regulating, you know, this book obviously talks about art. And the drawings that you did are colorful and fun. And in addition to that, though, you know, obviously, there's this mindfulness piece, right. And when I mentioned mindfulness, or talked about mindfulness, with parents, some resonate with that concept, and many of us were not raised in families where mindfulness was practiced, or even, you know, I think when I was growing up, it wasn't even a word that we ever used. I don't know that I heard that phrase that term until it was an adult. So if we think about mindfulness for those parents who don't know a lot about it, who have not taken mindful based stress reduction, which I, I did actually take a class in that it was amazing. But it's an involved practice, right. MBSR is an involved practice. For those parents who would just like to bring a little bit more mindfulness or understand it even better. What suggestions do you have for them?

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 21:20

Yeah, I mean, I think at its core, mindfulness is just paying attention without judgment. Like it's dropping into the present moment, and really just noticing what's happening. And I know a lot of parents are like, I can't stop thinking like, and I don't think meditation or mindfulness is about stopping thinking, I think that's a really lofty goal. But it's just like, when you're washing the dishes, paying attention to what the water feels like on your skin, or when you're walking up the stairs, walking a little slower, and noticing what that feels like in your body.

Even if it's just one breath, where you're present, you know, then you want to build on it. But I think it's a great place to start just having those little micro moments of recognition that you you are here, you know, sometimes I'll have clients put their hand on their heart and their belly and breathe into their body. I think we are a lot of us are cut off from our necks down and don't recognize what's going on in our body. And so even just doing a simple body scan, like Oh, my goodness, I'm really tight in my shoulders right now noticing that, and then like, opening up that space is such a great thing for parents to start doing. And then obviously, for kids, too.

Christy Keating 22:32

I mean, as you imagine that everyone listening right now is like, oh, yeah, because I felt myself do it, as you said that I was like, Yeah, I am kind of tight in my shoulders. And we don't pay attention to that enough. So, you know, in pausing in those moments, as we are, as you said, doing the dishes or walking up the stairs, I do find the older I get, the more I do pay attention as I walk up the stairs. But in some of those other moments, we tend to do them sort of mindlessly.

Now, just one, you know, we've got you know, everyone listening has a, like I said a wide variety of ages of children. And I myself have a five year old and a 13 year old, they're in really different developmental spaces. Yes. What are some suggestions for not just how we can experience or practice



mindfulness ourselves, but invite our children into that or teach them how to do that? Because that might feel it maybe for some kids feel intimidating to that.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 23:35

And see, that's where I think the art is such a natural bridge, because inviting your kid to notice what it feels like to run the paintbrush across the page. Like what happens when it starts to run out of paint? What do you notice? What does it feel like? And then notice when you mix these colors, what happens here? What kind of green do you make? Okay, and then what let's look at it as it goes across the page are noticing even what you're what you're drawn to like what colors your body is naturally drawn to. And I think I think artists a great way to do that. I mean, I think you can even do that with snacks, you know, slowing down and like noticing what you're eating, noticing what it's like to drink, you know, simple things.

Christy Keating 24:17

Well, and the thing that about that it makes it so much easier because I think a lot of people when they hear mindfulness, it gets linked up with meditation. Yeah, right. Which means for most of us as adults, I think of like sitting calmly and still with my hands resting on my knees and like trying to keep my brain on task, right focus on something, which is really hard to do. So I love that you're saying that, you know when we're talking with our kids about it or even ourselves, we can just notice the way our body feels. Notice the paintbrush on the paper and using those two things as a bridge.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 24:58

Yes, yeah, the moon Well, you can drop into those moments that better.

Christy Keating 25:02

Yeah, I love that. I love that. So I want to shift a little bit because, you know, obviously when I read your, your bio, I shared that you do art therapy, you are a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. You also do with your clients something called EMDR. Yes, many people listening will not have any idea what EMDR is. Can you tell us what it is? Yes. You know, how it relates to this to what we've just been talking about mindfulness art.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 25:34

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it really does. So EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, which is a terrible long name. And I think the woman that created it would have given it a different name, had she done it over. But basically, what happens in trauma and trauma can be a wide range of things. But what happens in trauma, anything from like, you know, giving a public speech in class for kids could be traumatizing to getting in a car accident or to a combat veteran, who sees and hears awful things is that we know that that trauma gets stored in the memory in our brain in a different way it gets stored in the amygdala.



So it's, it's that often triggered by that the five senses so you hear a sound that reminds you of being in a war zone, and you're flooded with that adrenaline, and you go into panic. And so what EMDR does is it re processes that memory. So it's not stored in the same area of the brain. And the way that we can do that with with EMDR is with the eye movements. So we can do bilateral eye movements rapidly back and forth, which is similar to what's happening when we're in REM sleep. Or we can do bilateral tapping we have we also have these like buzzers that they vibrate back and forth. Some people also use sound that goes back and forth. So any of those can really help to give that bilateral stimulation. And then so you ask the client to bring up the memory that worst incident or the worst image, you ask a series of questions like what what's your negative belief? What would you prefer to believe? How intense is it.

And then after it's kind of been activated, you do the bilateral movements, and you continue to check in. And you can watch because the distress level continues to go down. And if it doesn't, then you try other things. And you figure out what where they're getting stuck. But it is one of if not the most researched trauma treatments in the world with profound results. And when people are, they used to think that PTSD was a lifelong diagnosis. And it is not people are getting better. I'm seeing it with teenagers and like self harming behaviors getting better. I'm seeing it with like, anxiety and panic attacks get better with my teen clients.

Even like simple things like sports, like I have had kiddos that really get emotional playing sports. And I've been able to help them through that with EMDR. And then I've had clients you know, with a lots of unfortunate sexual trauma and sexual abuse, able to sleep and not have the nightmares and able to have successful relationships. So for me, it's just Oh, it's just a game changer for trauma. And I mean, I think I kind of think maybe this is too much. But I think we've all had trauma. And I think our kids can really activate our trauma response too. So I wish there was a way that we could all have EMDR in real life just to kind of bring those levels down.

Christy Keating 28:40

Yeah, I mean, when you think about trauma, as you said, it's such a broad range of experiences. And I want to make it really clear that we're talking about I mean, EMDR is something done by a licensed professional, this isn't, you know, this is a tool that parents can be aware of to access for their kids, not something parents would be trying to do in any way, shape or form at home. But you're right, that there are things I think that are traumatizing to our kids that maybe we as adults don't even classify as trauma.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 29:10

Yeah, I had a kid recently that was not sleeping, he kept wandering into his mom's room. And it was like I kind of was able to get down to the root. And it was when he was with grandparents. He had seen a YouTube video that was not appropriate for a kid that was really scary. And that stuck with him. And after one session of EMDR he was sleeping was like amazing for me to see transformation.



Christy Keating 29:31

Wow. And so then how do you blend because I know that you've written about about EMDR and art therapy? Yes. How did those two play with one another, if you will? Yes.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 29:44

So beautifully. Well, so much of our trauma, you know, is stored in visuals. So we have images and flashbacks. So with the EMDR. What I did when I went to Africa was a mix. So I would have clients pick disturbance or target And then they could draw the image. And then they could do a bilateral tapping or bilateral movements. And then we kept going through the trauma memory with the art and the bilateral tapping. And they just, we could see their distress levels come down. And we could also see in other ways their lives were getting better and more manageable.

Christy Keating 30:18

And when I think about trauma in a refugee camp, you know, that's, that's capital T.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 30:26

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, for sure.

Christy Keating 30:28

And so using both of those, obviously, for any of the folks listening, their children or themselves, they may say, Look, I'm not in need of the, you know, this more intensive level of therapy. But that art piece I can incorporate. I want to sort of circle that. And maybe this is almost full circle. Back to that art piece, which is, and I mentioned this earlier, a lot of kids we see jump wholeheartedly in art, they have no worries about mistakes, they don't expect it to be perfect. They don't care if the colors look good together, right? And we as adults, stop ourselves, because it doesn't, you know, I think we worry more about product rather than process. Yes. Any words of wisdom to because you've already shared the science about why doing art is beneficial? We know it's good for us, how do we get over the hump, if you will, and, and stop worrying about the product and focus on the process.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 31:32

So some of the ways I have used with clients that are I have a lot of very perfectionistic, high functioning women. And I will have them do art in ways like they they can't possibly be perfect. So I will ask them to do a drawing with their non dominant hand, or close their eyes and do a scribble drawing just to feel like what do you notice in your body when you're scribbling? Because yeah, that can be really problematic, that perfectionistic quality that a lot of us have wanting it to look a certain way.

Christy Keating 32:03

I have that too. And, you know, I shared with you I do a little bit of mixed media art, for fun. And I still it's you know, sometimes get in my own head about how do I how do I do this. But I've also done it with my daughter, and she's so much freer with it. And I've seen I've seen that'd be a great calming thing for her. And then for me, too. Yeah, and



Jocelyn Fitzgerald 32:28

I think like collage can be good too for perfectionist like pulling images, ripping them out, and then just piecing them together.

Christy Keating 32:35

Doesn't one of the things obviously that all of this leads to the the mindfulness, the art therapy, the EMDR. Although I know that's really trauma specific. But all of it, if I'm sort of detecting a thread that comes through this is to help us and our children regulate and manage our own emotions better. Which if you know, any parent that are like, I just need my child to calm down or manage themselves. I know that you also have done some recent work, not a book, but a new project to help parents help their children. Yeah, with managing those those emotions. Can you talk to us a little bit about that.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 33:24

So a friend and I, she kind of came up with the idea, she started creating a poster for her kid when her kid was one. And she came to me asking if I could help organize the art piece and then giving the the mental health piece to it. So we created this packet, we just put it out into the world, like a week ago. And people are loving it so much that people from around the world have it. We've had seven translations now. And so basically what it does is you ask your kid, what emotions are they feeling? And then we did some color zones? What does it feel like looking at weather? And then what are you feeling in your body? And how can I regulate myself? And then what do I need, and we go through these posters with them. And kids, and I have to save my teen clients are loving it, and the parents are loving it too. So asking them what they're feeling.

And then you can actually see kids in these pictures, because sometimes they're just thirsty or hungry, and so they can pick that out. But I've also almost always, when a kid picks out thirsty or hungry, they're also willing to pick out an emotion of what they're actually feeling. So we go through that, and then looking at what it feels like and they love for some reason picking out a weather pattern feel super safe, and super easy. And again, my teenage clients have loved this as well. I'm working on a new one for teenagers that is a little less young looking. And then what sensation Am I feeling in my body and this one is really where I couldn't find Do anything online on Etsy that was also bringing in the body sensations.

So I was super excited about this. And teaching kids to notice what they're feeling, again is so important. Like I mentioned earlier, so many people, so many adults and teens that I work with are really cut off from the neck down, and they don't want to notice their bodies. And it's so important because it really can teach us what's going to happen, what's happening, why am I feeling tight, and my shoulders, okay, I need to go do something else to relax my body. So then after you feel into your body, these are all skills they can look at, and you can go through with them on how to regulate themselves. I tell parents this all the time, the key to these worksheets is practicing, it's not doing it in the moment of



stress, it's really practicing a little bit every day. So you can draw your feelings, you can do the box breathing, you can go ask for a hug, tense and relax your body.

And I'll even now like because I've been teaching my my kids and my teen clients this for a while. They create their own list of things that they use to regulate, like somebody was like, I actually love painting my fingernails. So we added that to their list of things that they can do to regulate, what do I need, sometimes you might just need to connect with your family, or for my teenagers, they might need to connect with a friend make a phone call, they might need just to be alone, I have a lot of teenagers that love to have alone time and to sit in a room and listen to music. So it just gives you a big buffet of options of what you could possibly need. And sometimes in the moment, if you're in that fight or flight response, it can be too hard to think of something that you need. So seeing a visual reminder, okay, I need to go and just eat a snack or drink a cup of water, then they can go and do that take care of themselves and feel better. And then we just have some silly affirmations and instructions on how to use all of the posters.

Christy Keating 37:01

You know what I love about these? Because you and I were saying at the beginning, especially during the pandemic, but I think we're still seeing it now that when families are in need of help, like therapeutic help, or even coaching help, sometimes it is difficult to get that because there's there's a shortage. And so the tools that you were just sharing with us in those five questions, you know, what are you feeling? What's the weather report? Where is it in your body, all of those are so easy for parents to use at home. And, and probably make big progress. You know, just with those questions, and giving kids a visual to say this, this is what I'm feeling when they can always come up with the words themselves.

Jocelyn Fitzgerald 37:51

And this can be as little as one or two year olds, you can start teaching them this. And I think it's a great thing to have the posters like where you brush your teeth. So like doing that check in like it's anchored to that habit that you've already created with your kids. So they practice it throughout, you know, every time they brush their teeth, they notice what they're feeling what the weather is what's in their body.

Christy Keating 38:11

Well, and then those can be questions that even when you don't have the posters available to you that parents use to check in with their nose as they grow. And yeah, and go on. I love getting to do this work, Jocelyn, because even though I work with parents every day, when I get to speak with, you know, other people in the space that are working at it from a different angle, like I get to learn new things. Yeah, I think the research that you shared at the beginning, so powerful knowing the impact that that creativity has on our brains. And then knowing that there are therapies out there for those adults or children who need it, who need the extra oomph, if you will. And then something like this, that's just so easy for parents to use at home. So I'm gonna, I mean that there's just so many tools we've touched on, I'm going to stop there. Want to thank you for this amazing information.



Jocelyn Fitzgerald 39:03

Oh, you're so welcome. So my pleasure. Thanks for having me. It was so much fun talking to you.

Christy Keating 39:08

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for joining me everyone for this episode of The Heartful Parent Podcast. I hope that you got a lot out of my conversation with Jocelyn. Jocelyn was actually one of my guests for a masterclass inside the Heartful Parent Academy, where my members of that Academy got to ask questions, and they also received a free resource from Jocelyn at the end of the session.

If you could use that kind of support where you get to speak with me and other experts. Make sure that you check out all the benefits of joining the Heartful Parent Academy on my website. All you have to do is go to the heartfulparent.com Click on the Academy and all the information is there. We'd love to welcome you into that amazing community of thoughtful heartfelt parents regardless of whether that's the right fit for you, thanks for joining us on the podcast this week.

I'll see you again next week. Take care everyone and be heartfelt.

