Parent Education Resource Package for Primary Schools

**What to do when stressed out?**

**How to cope with parental stress?**

**Worksheet on Thinking Traps**

**Objective:** To help parents recognise thinking traps and practise using positive thinking to combat these negative thoughts.

**Activity Duration:** About 10 minutes

**Instructions:** Thinking traps are thoughts about the reality or the future that may not necessarily be true but can cause people to have strong negative emotions or feel a lot of pressure. Common thinking traps include:

* Catastrophising: Parents think that there will be extremely serious and irreversible consequences if they or their children do something wrong.
* Overgeneralization: Parents think that if they or their children do not do well in one aspect, they will not do well in other aspects.
* Every time is the same: Parents think that if they or their children do not do well now, they will not do well in the future.
* Fortune telling: Parents are sure that a certain method is useless without trying it.
* Perfectionism: Even if their or their children's overall performance is not bad, parents will still remember those areas where they can improve and feel a lot of pressure.
* Personalizing: Parents think that they should take full responsibility for their children's growth.

Can you identify the thinking traps arising from negative thinking below? Can you replace these examples of negative thinking with positive ones?

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| Negative thinking | Thinking traps | Positive thinking |
| 1. “If it weren’t for these few careless mistakes, he/she would have gotten full marks in this test!” |  |  |
| 1. “How could my child go to a good secondary school if he/she failed in the primary school exam? If he/she could not go to a good secondary school, how can he/she go to a good university? If he/she could not go to a good university, how can he/she find a good job...” |  |  |
| 1. “Playing games with my child? We haven’t played games together for a long time! How can playing games help you learn? Isn’t this a method that is only used when he/she is in kindergarten?” |  |  |
| 1. “My child’s mathematics grades are terrible, and his/her English and Chinese grades aren’t much better! He/She’s completely useless!” |  |  |
| 1. “It’s all my fault! I don’t know how to be a parent at all!” |  |  |
| 1. “There’s no point talking to him/her because he/she won’t listen. If that worked, it wouldn’t be necessary to tell him/her again!” |  |  |