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

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 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

**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

**Calm state**
- You can cope with everyday upsets
- You enjoy today and feel optimistic about tomorrow

**Depleted energy**
- You are feeling calm and positive

**Stress build-up**
- Small things can trigger big reactions

**Ready to explode**
- Things related to your child will trigger big reactions

For more information contact: Research Centre for Children and Families, Sydney School of Education and Social Work
e rccf.research@sydney.edu.au  w sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/research-centre-for-children-and-families.html
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For more ideas and resources for parents, go to:
Light in the Dark
Powering the healing journey

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 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 do for yourself today:
- Spend time with people who understand your pain
- Spend time in nature or on Country 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

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?