



## Tips for Dads Working from Home During Covid with Derek Ebbs

### activity sheet

**There is no such thing as a perfect parent. So just be a real one. Sue Atkins**

Being a dad can be joyous and stressful all at the same time, however restrictions from the pandemic have added so many extra stresses to a working parent's life.

It's especially important for working dads to remember that although things might feel overwhelming right now, this situation is temporary and it's okay to not feel okay!

We enlisted the help of Derek Ebbs, a relationship psychotherapist, to share his best advice on how dads can navigate the juggle of working from home while still feeling like they are showing up for their kids and families.

Derek shared that the number one concern from working dads at this time, seems to be, 'I can't get the work done from home and attend to my kids'. Often, working dads might put extra pressure on themselves to perform at work, especially if they consider themselves the provider for the family. However, this mentality is likely to see our stress increase five-fold, and as our stress increases we're more likely to feel agitated.

Derek's best advice for dads working from home is to be strong, kind and committed to both projects as much as you can. Part of the reason we go to work is because of the sense of independence, but the reason is of course to provide for our families. Striving to be strong, kind and committed to our kids, work and families is all we can ask in this unprecedented time.

**Here are some tips for dads working from home and caring for their children:**

- **Keep up routines where you can and start new ones as well.** Try to keep mealtimes, such as breakfast and dinner at their normal times and use these as an opportunity to check in with each other throughout the day. Perhaps you could start a new routine of having morning tea together or going for a quick walk at lunchtime.
- **Keep your stress levels in check.** Taking charge of your stress models to your children how they can regulate their stresses – and that's good enough parenting in action. Which is good enough to build strong, confident, resilient children who feel understood.
- **Embrace flexibility.** There is no doubt going to be interruptions to the odd Zoom call and days that just don't go to plan. Try not to sweat the small stuff, communicate openly with your employer about any delays and strive to tie up any loose ends the following day.
- **Lean on your partner.** If you have a spouse or partner also working from home, try to tag-team the important uninterruptible tasks so that you are both working as effectively as possible.
- **Communication is key.** You could try to implement a traffic light system to help your kids identify when they can approach you and when you can't be disturbed. Or have an 'Ask me later' notebook for your children to write down anything they wanted to ask you while you were busy, and you can go through it every few hours and give them your full attention.

But most importantly, just remember to be gentle on yourself! Working from home and caring for your children is a huge challenge and all you can do is the very best you can. You got this!