



DAY BY DAY

Emotional Wellbeing in Parents of Disabled Children

Joanna Griffin

Free Association Books 28th May

Paperback Original £14.99

'The title 'Day by Day' is taken from one of the most common responses from other parents, which is the advice to take it day by day and acknowledge and accept that your emotions may change and fluctuate even over short periods of time. We can feel happy one day as our child has achieved something we didn't think possible previously. Then we can feel devastated and in despair after a poor night's sleep or an unsupportive response from a service or school.' **Joanna Griffin**

In *Day by Day*, psychologist Joanna Griffin focuses on the wellbeing of parents and carers of disabled children. Parenting a disabled child can elicit complex emotional responses. For many parents the focus of those around them is solely on the child and their own needs become neglected. The author's personal experience as a parent of a disabled child and her professional expertise informs this book which explores what helps, and hinders, parent carers' emotional wellbeing. Research suggests that mental health, relationships, family life, access to work and leisure activities and finances can all be affected.

Collating academic research and hundreds of insights from parent carers, Joanna Griffin has identified seven areas that support parent carer wellbeing. She provides tools to help families navigate the intensely complicated emotions that can impact everyday life such as acknowledging feelings, connecting with positive others, empowering yourself, regularly engaging in self-care and finding your own sense of meaning and purpose in life.

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that parent carers and families have seen their support networks completely disappear. It has exacerbated existing problems, challenges and neglect already being experienced by families, and highlighted the impact of cuts to care packages, structural inequalities and discrimination that disabled people experience. More than ever, parent carers need to acknowledge their emotional wellbeing and to find ways to support and nurture this, step-by-step, every day. In *Day by Day*, Joanna Griffin shows how to take these steps.

'This book, written from Jo's personal experience combined with her professional knowledge and expertise, is for and about families. It is firmly grounded in reality, with quotes from families that

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many of us can easily identify with. It is informative and practical, honest and hopeful. This is a resource that will not only be useful for families but also help professionals who support them to better understand what life is like, day by day.'

Viv Cooper, CEO of the Challenging Behaviour Foundation and Parent Carer

'Written for parents of disabled children, they will find emotional support, encouragement and practical guidance in this important book... a lifeline for parents of a disabled child and a comprehensive resource book for professionals.'

Dr Lisa Greenspan, Chartered Counselling Psychologist, Founding Director London Accessible Psychotherapy & Inclusive Supervision (LAPIS)

'Written with Joanna's insight as a Counselling Psychologist but more importantly as a mum, Day by Day is raw, honest and practical. The book will resonate with all parents of disabled children and become an empowering source of emotional support for those of us who care.'

Sam Carlisle, Mum of Elvi, 19, campaigner and founder of Cause Communications

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joanna Griffin is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist who has been undertaking doctoral research on this topic. She has worked in a number of different clinical settings, including the NHS, and provides independent supervision and consultancy work. She established the website www.affinityhub.uk to signpost to emotional support for parent carers.

*I wrote this book to share what I have learnt over the last thirteen years in the hope that no-one else feels so alone in the confusion and heartache as I did. Although it can be hard to find other families, and living in a mainstream world can feel isolating, there are other families out there with a similar experience and it can be valuable and restorative to find them. I hope this book reassures you that you are not mad or bad for feeling a whole raft of emotions in relation to parenting a disabled child, often all at the same time. This is an ordinary response to an extraordinary situation. I also hope it offers you signposts and ideas on how to support yourself during the journey. **Joanna Griffin***

**Joanna Griffin is available to speak to, write feature articles
and participate in online events**

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