

Blocked Care:

When Caring Starts to Feel Hard

Blocked care happens when stress, exhaustion, rejection, or repeated conflict makes it harder for an adult to feel warmth, empathy, or connection toward a child.

Signs of Blocked Care

- Feel emotionally distant from the child
- Expect the worst
- Assume negative intent
- Feel resentful about the child's needs
- Avoid interaction when possible
- Focus mostly on correction
- Feel like nothing you do matters
- Stop noticing small positives
- Feel numb instead of compassionate
- React with frustration faster than usual
- Feel guilty for not feeling more patient
- Think, "I just can't do this today"

Why Blocked Care Happens

- Repeated conflict
- Frequent rejection
- Feeling unappreciated
- Chronic stress
- Lack of rest
- Feeling ineffective
- Constant crisis mode
- Unresolved grief or disappointment
- Too little support
- Too much responsibility
- Taking behavior personally
- Being stuck in survival mode

What Blocked Care is Not

- Proof that you do not care
- A sign that you are a bad adult
- A failure of character
- Something to be ashamed of
- A reason to give up
- A lack of love
- Permanent
- Solved by simply "trying harder"
- The child's fault
- The adult's fault
- Something that should be ignored

Steps to Reopen Care

- Notice your own stress response
- Lower your voice
- Pause before correcting
- Take one regulated breath
- Look for one strength
- Offer one low-pressure connection
- Repair after conflict
- Use fewer words
- Step away before reacting harshly
- Ask for help sooner
- Celebrate small progress

***Blocked care is not the absence of love.
It is often the presence of overwhelm.***

