

Ep 3. How do I help my child deal with big emotions and tantrums?

[00:00:00] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** I do believe that parents nowadays, or parents of today, a, a modern parent or a modern caregiver is better positioned because we understand a child as a holistic being and our role instead of punishing emotions, our role is to help the child, uh, regulate their emotions and in order to have for, for us to have them we need to understand that the child is an emotional being, instead of punishing them, we, we, we should have them with how they should, you know, express emotions in socially acceptable and appropriate ways. That is emotional regulation.

[00:00:43] **Vanessa Pickford:** Welcome, I'm your host, Vanessa Pickford, and this is a podcast series "The Heath Wrap", powered by Mediclinic Prime - Healthcare experts at your service. Mediclinic Prime is a health program created by our team of dedicated experts that unlocks a world of health [00:01:00] information for you and your family.

[00:01:01] Sign up today through the link in the show notes, to gain access to a variety of free resources, like a health calendar to view webinars and other events taking place in the hospitals, newsletters written by specialists, competitions, sporting entries, and so fourth. In episodes 1 and 2, we spoke to Meg Faure about sleeping through the night and fussy eating habits.

[00:01:24] We had a wonderful time and she shared many helpful tips, and even offered a special discount code for her "Parent Sense' App! So if you missed those episodes, go back and take a listen. Well, today I'm excited to announce that we're speaking to Dr Happy Setsiba about tantrums and big emotions. Perhaps your child's tantrums feel so overwhelming that you're worried about taking them out in public. Or maybe your baby will be a toddler soon

[00:01:51] and you've heard many people speak about those "terrible twos". If so, then this episode is for you. Keep listening as we explore how you can help your child or the child in your care with those big emotions. And, if you haven't yet, subscribe to our podcast so you don't miss any future episodes, and don't forget to share it with anyone else you know who may be looking for insight too.

[00:02:15] Please note that the views shared by any guests in this podcast may not necessarily reflect the views of Mediclinic, so please consult a medical practitioner if you have concerns. So as a mother of four, you'd think I would've experienced my fair share of tantrums during my children's early years.

[00:02:35] But I actually got off very lightly. In fact, my husband and I thought we were styling at parented because we waited with trepidation and then cruised through the terrible twos with my first two sons. This lulled us into a false sense of security and we went ahead and had a third child. Well, with hindsight at number three, been born first, he would likely have ended up an only child.[00:03:00]

[00:03:00] Luke took tantrums and the 'terrible twos' to a whole new level and we were never quite sure what would set him off. I distinctly remember one occasion when my youngest son was having a tantrum of epic proportions, which resulted in him crab-crawling on his back in our passage, screaming to the extent that his vocal chords would allow.

[00:03:23] He was inconsolable, but the true low point came when I received a telephone call from my neighbor who, with that kind of glee, that only comes from having older children and the tantrum season put behind you, Carrie giggled, that she could hear my son having a tantrum. The true insult was that our homes are set about 400 meters apart.

[00:03:47] And yet my son's tantrum was as present in my neighbor's home as it was in mine. So, to reassure you, if it feels like your child is throwing a lot of tantrums, you're not the [00:04:00] only one experiencing this. According to the Cleveland clinic, toddler's

throw an average of one tantrum a day. That's around 30 a month.

[00:04:08] It can be frustrating to see your child having a tantrum. And maybe you feel helpless when it comes to calming your child and helping them navigate those big emotions. You might also be familiar with those disdainful looks and shaming comments when it happens at the shops or at a relative's home, fortunately help is at hand let's chat to Dr Setsiba

[00:04:29] to find out what to do. Listeners, just to mention that our recording is done remotely and despite our best efforts, sometimes nature gets away. As you will hear with the presence of the rooster during part of our recording. Dr. Happy Setsiba has been qualified as a clinical psychologist for over 18 years.

[00:04:52] She has been running a successful and continuously growing private practice for more than 10 years. Her calling as a mental health [00:05:00] specialist is driven by her desire to empower people of all ages as well as couples, families and communities to live their best lives through optimum functioning. Her belief is that people can achieve so much more when they are mentally sound welcome, Dr. Setsiba It's great to have you with us today.

[00:05:20] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Thank you very much, Vanessa. Uh, it's great to, to be around. I am excited to be here. Thank you for having me.

[00:05:31] **Vanessa Pickford:** Thank you. So Dr. Setsiba let's dive right in by me, starting with you, defining for us what a tantrum is?

[00:05:40] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** uh, a tantrum or a temper tantrum as we call is an episode of an emotional outburst.v[00:05:48] Usually that, that children experience, we say they're acting out because we see it in behaviors that they, they display that are angel unpleasant and [00:06:00] disruptive upsetting for parents. And sometimes it's so disturbing that parents it's often hard to ignore. They just draw your attention. A child will just

[00:06:09] Display those behaviors and you cannot ignore them. Um, it'll be out usually out of frustration, out of feeling, um, maybe angry out of, um, not able to express exactly how they feel because they are children they're not always able to express how they feel. So you see that in those behaviors that they, they display to suggest that something is wrong in the way. [00:06:34] Um, they go about how they.

[00:06:37] **Vanessa Pickford:** Mm, so that frustration and anger, um, you've mentioned that they are unable to express how they're feeling, so they end up acting out. So what usually happens then during a tantrum? Is there a, a set rhythm to a tantrum? Is there something that you can see in terms of all children follow a certain [00:07:00] pattern when they're having a tantrum?

[00:07:03] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Most definitely because we talk about acting out, you know, uh, we say it's acting out because it's observed behaviors, you know, uh, that you see children displaying. And what happens is children will go from screaming, kicking, biting, throwing themselves on the floor. Have you ever seen children, you know, doing that?

[00:07:26] I so familiar with this teaching you sometimes why they cry endlessly, the extreme will be holding time to hold their breaths. You know, spells like that, sometimes throwing items and breaking things and tensing their bodies and, you know, becoming stiff to a point where it scares you as a parent. Cause, um, at that time when the child would be doing that, you wouldn't be knowing what to do.

[00:07:51] Those are some of the behaviors and these behaviors, uh, sometimes with the, uh, when they display such behaviors, children can hurt [00:08:00] themselves in the process. Like for instance, when they, they throw themselves on the floor, when they bang their heads on the, on, on, on the walls and when they throw things and sometimes they can, they can, uh, this behaviors.

[00:08:12] Can create, uh, what we call self harm or harming others. They can harm you as a mother. They can just pick up a, a, uh, something and throw it at you, or they can just treat themselves

with, with, especially if they're on sharp objects and this behaviors are usually impulsive. As we said, they act out. It's like they're acting without thinking.

[00:08:32] They don't really have the ability to charge whether the behavior will end up, you know, being harmful to them or to others. It's usually something that is really like, uh, that, that they do cause they're reacting and they're not able to control it. They, they're not able to regulate, you know, their behaviors, um, to be socially acceptable or appropriate because they're not at that age as yet.

[00:08:59] **Vanessa Pickford:** Yes. So now, you know, it sounds very familiar and I'm sure as parents, most of us can recount a time where our children has had a tantrum and we end up feeling as overwhelmed as the child during that tantrum. So, as parents, is there a particular developmental age or stage that we can expect tantrums to start?

[00:09:23] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Oh, yes, it can be very overwhelming. I must say, as parents to a point where you will end up having a tantrum yourself, but it is important to understand about children's developmental stages. Uh, there is a stage called 'Toddlerhood'. That is when your child has just turned one between the ages of one and four. It is a crucial stage of development because not only your child is developing physically, we're talking about developmental milestones.

[00:09:53] You know, when we take history at work, uh, you inquire about, you know, developmental milestones [00:10:00] you ask about, when did the child start walking, feeding themselves dressing and, and, and, uh, toilet training and, and, and all those. But we also need to be aware that children are also, uh, social and also emotional beings as they develop physically.

[00:10:16] They also have that aspect, an emotional aspect, uh, of development that. That is what we call developmental task or challenges. One of the challenges that I, I think children experience at that time is the language development. The language is not yet developed. They're not able to articulate how, how always

able to articulate how they feel because they don't have the vocabulary remember, but it.

[00:10:39] Doesn't take away the fact that they still have emotion, they still get frustrated. They still feel certain things. They still get angry. They still feel they want to take certain tasks on their own. And when they're not able to do that, they get frustrated. So at that time, I think parents should understand that, um, the, the children's feelings in [00:11:00] that sense that when they throw a tantrum, it's just a way of expressing. A way of communicating that I'm feeling this way now.

[00:11:09] **Vanessa Pickford:** Okay. So then apart from the developmental milestones and tantrums, essentially being developmentally normal, does the temperament of the child affect the frequency of tantrums and big emotions?

[00:11:24] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Hmm. Uh, you are saying something very important.

[00:11:28] Uh, we need to understand that, uh, it's um, quite expected. It is a normal process of development. It's part of the child's development where they will have, as I mentioned earlier, Stage what we call developmental challenges and developmental. It's like a task that the child has to accomplish and frustration at that stage requires a parent to gently take the child through.

[00:11:54] And it can only take a parent that understands that, okay, this a normal part of development, it is quite [00:12:00] expected. I think, um, Parents get frustrated and feel like it's not supposed to happen cause they don't understand and they don't know that it's a normal developmental phase. Once we understand that, okay, this is what we can expect from our children.

[00:12:16] Then I, I do believe that parents will be able to, you know, handle it better. Remember it doesn't last forever. As the child grows and develops. As you equip the child with skills, you know, as the child, the, the, the, the language, the child develops a language, uh, the more the child is able to express themselves, express how they feel, the lesser, the, you know, the tantrum.

[00:12:39] Uh, there would be a time when the child will be able to express and not throw a tantrum.

[00:12:46] **Vanessa Pickford:** You've mentioned that during toddlerhood that one to four year age group, the child is having to cope with their own developmental awakening and negotiate how to respond to the world around them with limited communication [00:13:00] skills. Now everybody speaks about the terrible twos, but in reality, all parents of older children know that they don't stop there.

[00:13:08] We have the thrashing threes and well, the fours have a far less polite tantrum title. So why is it then that older children and not only toddlers also throw tantrums?

[00:13:20] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Young people and, and, and, and other children who are not toddlers can still find themselves stuck, you know, in that, um, form of a language, because most, most probably because of various reasons, you know, one of them would be what I mentioned earlier on, uh, that the, the child hasn't really learned, you know, um, enough skills to express themselves, to express how, how, how, how they feel or to express their needs.[00:13:47] So they will fall back. They will regress into, uh, a language of tantrums it's possible.

[00:13:56] **Vanessa Pickford:** Right. And so then would you say that there are [00:14:00] different types of tantrums? Are types of tantrums related to age group? Or is it simply that children have tantrums for different reasons?

[00:14:10] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** But, uh, there are those that we can classify as, as frustration or fatigue tantrums, attention seeking or demanding.

[00:14:20] Tantrum, like for, for instance, they demand that you buy them something and you say, no, you know, you know that, okay. Not so long, they will be throwing a tantrum. And then there are tantrums that we say they are refusal or avoidance when, like, for instance, when they don't want to eat, when they don't want to

sleep at a certain time or when they don't want to wear a clothing item, Um, uh, and there are those that, that are very disruptive.

[00:14:46] Those that are in public, I'm sure you have seen, uh, that a lot, quite a lot in stores where a mother or a caregiver is stuck with this child that is throwing themselves on the floor that, that is screaming in the store and all eyes are on them. [00:15:00] So, yeah, I think, uh, there are those that, that, that are disruptive that you cannot.

[00:15:04] Ignore. And then there are rage tantrums, you know, where I mentioned examples area on, off, um, a child that is like here, your child loses control, you know, completely. They are so overwhelmed by their emotions physically and emotionally that you can even see, like, they, they, they, they bang their heads against their wall and they, they, they even at the point of, of hurting themselves.

[00:15:31] And, and if you think the child, if they are doing that, if you think they could harm themselves, then I think that would be a time when you would be like guarding against as a parent? Uh, like for instance, if a child has a rage tantrum, I think it's important for the parent to be, and, and to take safety precautions because yeah.

[00:15:51] Children can there those children who can throw Arum to a point where you, you would not know what to do.

[00:16:01] **Vanessa Pickford:** So you've mentioned now the rage tantrums. Are there any other red flags to watch out for, uh, that point, which the tantrum isn't just a tantrum, but rather the sign that something much deeper is going on?

[00:16:14] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** The following should be red flags when it, if it's consistent [00:16:19] and last longer, like for instance, um, when it a child within a, we get more or less three to five time tantrums in a day that lasts for an hour consistently as an example, or, um, the, as I said, the frequency, um, if it, if, if, if it happens over and over, if it happens longer, if it involves self injury or injury to

others, like destroying things, as I said, breaking things, or that suggest.

[00:16:50] A child is in an extremely aggressive, um, uh, mood or in, in an extremely aggressive, um, is experiencing [00:17:00] extremely aggressive, um, emotions. So I think those are the things that the parents should start to be concerned about when, uh, they see, um, in those behaviors, that display that is display by children. And the last thing is when their child.

[00:17:17] Hold their breath. Like, as I mentioned at the beginning that sometimes a child will cry and then hold their breath for longer so that they don't breathe. And sometimes they can faint. Sometimes they lose consciousness, or sometimes children cry to point where they. You know, um, with their, their parents, especially if it is a child was successfully potty trained.

[00:17:42] And when they, they start maybe at the ages three, four, and start to cry to, to that point where they swallow their pants or when they wet their pants or when they start to hold their breath, when they cry, then that is a cause of concern. [00:18:00]

[00:18:00] **Vanessa Pickford:** And with that, I mean, you've mentioned those children who show signs of significant aggression, potentially the breath holders or the children who are wetting themselves during a tantrum.

[00:18:11] Would you say that those children may need to be evaluated by a healthcare provider?

[00:18:16] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** It is important as a parent to take note of when it is time to take your child to the doctor. Parent, every parent or caregiver, you will know when your child is throwing a tantrum out of, you know, um, just a tantrum. And when it's, you know, something out of the norm or out of the usual, because of the pattern that I explained earlier on, you will know the patterns somehow more or less.

[00:18:44] That. Okay. After 10 minutes they'll be done or after 15 minutes or they, they cry or the whining is not accompanied by

any other thing. Just whine until they sleep. But if it is, if it gets too, you know, [00:19:00] complicate like the wine accompanied by scratching and wetting, and soiling the pants, when there is more than one, like, uh, for instance, one.

[00:19:12] Behavioral reaction that you, that you observe in your child while they they're having a tantrum, I think it, should tell you as a parent. Okay. That maybe it's about time that you consult with, with, with a practitioner, a doctor, because sometimes the children throw tantrums when they're not feeling well.

[00:19:33] Uh, because they're not able to express that I have a headache, I have a tummy pain, they will throw a tantrum. So sometimes yes, it's just communication that they're not, they're just not feeling well physically.

[00:19:46] **Vanessa Pickford:** Right. So I can fully appreciate that. And, and possibly the child who is just feeling unwell and therefore throwing the tantrum is not going to be displaying those, those very dramatic, aggressive type of tantrums or the breath holding, or [00:20:00] perhaps the manipulative wetting.

[00:20:02] But essentially, you know, when parents reach the end of their tether and they need to seek help, who should be the parent's first choice of healthcare professional to take their child to? Should it be the GP or the paediatrician or straight to a psychologist? What would your recommendation be?

[00:20:22] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Uh, you know what? [00:20:26] I would recommend that, um, The parent take the child to the pediatrician or a GP first to rule out there isn't anything, I think that is the standard procedure. When we work with, with, especially the little ones, because sometimes you can come to visit, uh, consult with the psychologist only to find that it's a medical problem.

[00:20:47] So as part of the multidisciplinary team, uh, the psychologist, sometimes the occupational therapy, sometimes they, um, The social worker. And, uh, as I, [00:21:00] as I mentioned, uh, part of the team who have our own like fields of specialty, but I always always feel that the, the very first stop, the very first person to visit is

the pediatrician or your GP because they, they, the one that would be able to rule out if this is a medical problem or any other.

[00:21:20] What will happen is that the GP or the pediatrician will always look for pointers or, uh, highlight things that they should, you know, be concerned about. They should take care of, like, for instance, if the child, if the temperature is high, then they will know that the child had a tantrum because most probably because they they're sick or something.

[00:21:40] And if they can't find any organic pathology or any reason medical reason why the child is displaying such behaviors, then they will refer the child to the relevant specialist, the psychologist, or refer the family to, uh, the social worker, if [00:22:00] there are other, you know, other issues that, you know, they feel, uh, you know, need to be attended to [00:22:06] But the, the pediatrician or the GP are the very first people that I think parents should take their children to.

[00:22:14] **Vanessa Pickford:** Well, thank you for that clarity. And it's worth mentioning at this point that in the event of an emergency or a concern for the health of the child, medic clinic has a 24 hour call center where they're able to speak to registered nurse and receive medical advice and assistance.

[00:22:32] The nurse can even ma arrange an ambulance if necessary. 0860 233 333. Why not pause this episode quickly and save this number to your phone so that you can have it on hand in case of an emergency.

[00:22:47] **Vanessa Pickford:** Now back to you, Dr. Setsiba, um, When we are putting those [00:23:00] more dramatic tantrums aside, and we are looking at dare [00:23:03] I said, the more run of the mill form, how should parents and caregivers manage those different types of tantrums? Um, for example, if a caregiver sees a child struggling with their emotions, is there a way in which they can prevent the tantrum from starting?

[00:23:21] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Oh yes. Uh, yes, Vanessa very much so. Remember, um, we cannot.

[00:23:26] As caregivers or parents, maybe let me mention that it's important. We cannot prevent a tantrum completely. It sometimes may not be because as we said, this is how children communicate. Especially if we see in children, we cannot eradicate or, or, or, or prevent them completely, uh, remember you are helping a child to regulate their emotions.

[00:23:50] So sometimes it's like saying, uh, preventing them to feel. You allow children to feel so that you help them regulate, um, [00:24:00] emotions through modifying behaviors, as much as we want to help children, we have to understand that children have emotions and they display them in certain ways, but there are ways in which we can manage them.

[00:24:14] And even, uh, make sure that put them, you know, we allow children to manage. We allow children to behave in such a way that, that we can, we can be able to, to work together, to manage, you know, uh, tantrums. One thing that we can try to do, uh, as an example, we can try to keep it a daily routine as an example, because when you know what to expect that for instance.

[00:24:40] When children anticipate sleeping times as an example and feeding times, this is what I usually tell parent that if you can just try to, um, to be regular, to be consistent about sleeping times so that you prepare your child that okay. At eight, every, every, [00:25:00] every day, eight o'clock is bedtime. And then maybe five or 10 minutes before you just tell your child that we'll be sleeping in 10, in 10 minutes, or in, in, in no time, we are preparing to go to bed.

[00:25:12] And also feeding time. Children shouldn't get surprises. Uh, even when you, you be going out with them, you can always use a language that they understand. Tell them, going to the shops and you tell them about your expectation. I expect that to behave this way. Uh, when you see toys, we are not going to buy choice today will put a day aside when we'll be going to buy toys.

[00:25:36] I, I do think that if you try to prepare your children or your child in advance before you do something, that might be a

better way to manage the tantrum because the children sometimes know what to expect. And then the second thing is, try to like, for instance, if you give a child a variety of choices, remember they are, they, they at an age where they want to [00:26:00] be in control, where they define.

[00:26:02] Sometimes your others, where they want to be independent. Uh, one, one thing that I find it like with some children is that, um, when you give them more choices, like for instance, in terms of clothes, instead of taking out one set of clothes, they you're going to wear this today. Just try to put a variety of them.

[00:26:25] Maybe four different sets of clothes and give them a choice. It'll empower them. It'll make them to feel like they're more in control. If you say to them, uh, putting four different sets of clothes, say, choose one from here, they may, uh, realize that they have a, a wide variety and then they, they have the power to choose.

[00:26:44] And then, um, another thing that I think parents can do to avoid triggers such as missed naps and, and, and child getting too hungry. I mentioned earlier on that sometimes the child throw a tantrum because they're, they're, [00:27:00] they're hungry. Don't wait for amount, time to pass or don't wait if it's possible. If parents can do that, avoid child, the child getting too hungry, avoid things like over stimulation because children are very active and they don't know where to stop some.

[00:27:14] When they're they're overstimulated, they can't sleep. And they're irritable. When children are not getting enough sleep, they get irritable. And then they have a tantrum.

[00:27:25] **Vanessa Pickford:** Mm. Right. You've shared some practical tips about how the parents can help to reduce the potential for temper tantrums.[00:27:33] Now, what skills can we teach children to help them navigate and regulate those big emotions?

[00:27:44] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Okay. Um, I think the, the first and most important thing is, uh, communicating properly. Remember I said, children, display this behavior, because they're not able to

communicate. Okay. You [00:28:00] can't teach a, a one year old, um, how to, you know, express themselves.

[00:28:05] But I feel it is important that they understand the basics of language, you know, um, they won't be one year, six months forever. One day there'll be two years. So I feel it's important that you communicate clearly to them so that they understand. Children learn from copying, they learn from hearing.

[00:28:29] They learn from observing. When you are communicating to them clearly what you expect from them in a language that they understand, they, you are teaching them that language. You are teaching them basic communication skills, teaching them how to communicate their emotions by naming those emotions.

[00:28:48] If they're feeling a bit frustrated, if they're feeling angry, you can name it so that you teach them how to articulate, you, teach [00:29:00] them how to express, um, how they feel and also teaching them how to stay calm. I know that, uh, children may not understand what it means to stay calm, but you can always, uh, find the language that you feel you can meet each other halfway.

[00:29:15] For instance, if, instead of saying, uh, this is what you're feeling. Um, at this point you can just label it energy instead of an emotion as an example. And, uh, you can teach them the breathing exercises as an example, um, by I did, this is also what we do with, um, Adult when they're overwhelmed by emotions, we teach them how to breathe correctly.

[00:29:41] So I think breathing is something that children understand very well. If you tell them, count up up to three and then breathe in and out from time to time or when you are feeling this way, uh, stop and close your eyes. And. And breathe and breathe and, and, and also [00:30:00] practical doing that practically with them from time to time.

[00:30:03] **Vanessa Pickford:** Yes. Excellent. And I'm going to add in there that one of the tips that we were given as parents and,

and I've got four children, Dr. Setsiba. So I was told that it's best, actually not to necessarily address the tantrum as it's happening in terms of saying to the child, start breathing now, et cetera, but actually to you teach them those skills ahead of time so that when the tantrum happens, that that you're able to say right now, we are going to start sort of regulating our breathing and staying calm, et cetera.

[00:30:34] I'm going to pick up on a point that you made that children learn through observation, particularly watching their parents or their child minders. So how do you suggest that the parent responds in the throes of the tantrum? We've all seen those parents who get more and more uptight and overwhelmed and anxious as their child is having a tantrum, um, in their attempts to try and stop it.

[00:30:57] Versus other parents who seem to step back and [00:31:00] become quite aloof, allowing the tantrum to play itself out. What would you recommend that a parent does as their child has a tantrum?

[00:31:09] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** So I would advise parents to be as calm as possible. Number one, to be aware of what is going on a tantrum is a tantrum and, and maybe the way to handle it would be to regulate your own emotions first.

[00:31:23] It's it, it, I think a parent that you find calmer when a child is in a tantrum, will be able to know what to do, because when you are calm, you're able to read the situation, uh, objectively you're able to, um, sometimes to evaluate whether the situation will be getting out of hand or not. Unlike when you are also frustrated and, you know, um, Having overwhelming emotion.

[00:31:51] It will not be easy for you to be able to, you know, to judge or to see everything else would be like, uh, inflated. And you, [00:32:00] you, you tend to see it as a catastrophe.

[00:32:03] **Vanessa Pickford:** That's excellent advice. So in your opinion, has parenting then changed over the years when it comes to dealing with tantrums?

[00:32:15] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Uh, you know, parenting. [00:32:18] Mm we have, is it that we have different styles? You have different approaches of parenting. In the past I would believe that, um, because parents in the past and caregivers then didn't really understand, you know, emotional development as much as I don't think there was much as much as there is now about emotional development, about holistic development of a child.

[00:32:45] I think in the past, the tantrum would be handled. Uh, you know, you can imagine when we were growing up, throwing a tantrum, you'd be getting a hiding. You know, you'll be locked in, in, in, in, in your room. But I think with time, as we are starting to understand [00:33:00] that a child is also a human being and it is okay for a child to display or to react, uh, emotionally to have emotional reactions.

[00:33:10] Um, I do believe that parents nowadays, or parents of today, a modern parent or a modern caregiver is better positioned because we understand a child as a holistic being and our role instead of punishing emotions, our role is to help the child, uh, regulate their emotions and in order to have for, for us to help them, we need to understand that the child is an emotional being we need, instead of punishing them, we, we, we should have them with how they should, you know, express emotions in socially acceptable and appropriate, appropriate ways. [00:33:50] That is emotional regulation.

[00:33:52] **Vanessa Pickford:** Yes. Now it. No, that's, that's a wonderful answer. Thank you. It's one thing for a child [00:34:00] to have a tantrum in the privacy of their home, but it's every parent's fear when that tantrum is taken into a public space or for example, at a relatives home. So how should parents or caregivers respond if they are shamed by others [00:34:16] when the child is throwing attention?

[00:34:19] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** Oh, Vanessa, that is a very difficult one. You can imagine if you have it, you know, you have had an experience yourself as a mother or as a caregiver, how embarrassing and how disempowering it is, you know, um, for you to find

yourself in a, in a public space, in a restaurant or in a store where a child is like throwing.

[00:34:42] It's like just became a hurricane and all eyes, you know, all eyes are on you and you just reach from the silences that they are louder. Uh, people can be judgemental. That's one thing for sure. But we need to understand as parents and caregivers that, [00:35:00] you know, the question is, what can you do? What can you say?

[00:35:03] You don't have the power to control. Maybe understand one thing that as a parent, uh, you don't have the power to control what people think about you, you don't have the power, you know, to stop people from thinking what they think about you. I, I do believe that a parent that is self assured, a parent that is a calm at the time when a tantrum occurs.

[00:35:25] Will be more focusing on them and their children. Um, it is easy to focus on the outside noises to focus on the outside eyes when that happens, because at the time you won't be knowing what to do. I think it's up to us as parents and caregivers dealing with young children that when a tantrum, occurs in a public space, whoever will be saying something, do this to that.

[00:35:50] I do think that you have the power to focus on yourself, how you feel and the child at that time, remember I said, a calmer [00:36:00] parent is better equipped to deal with a tantrum at that time. You will think clearly, you will think of maybe moving away with a child, uh, without anyone having to tell you that. I feel that if a parent that is more like, um, um, concerned or that, that hears more outside voices is a parent.

[00:36:21] That is that, feeling out of control, once you feel you are in control and you understand that it is in control it was something that, that you didn't cause yourself and remain calm. I think you will know what to do at that time. And what, whoever says that you don't, you under have to understand that you don't have much control over that.

[00:36:45] **Vanessa Pickford:** Well, I love what you've said in the segment. And in fact, I want to repeat it for the benefit of our listeners, that you do not have the power to control what people think about you. So rather focus on yourself and how you respond to the child. [00:37:00] That was wonderful. So there is so much conversation nowadays about diet.

[00:37:06] And what we should and should not include in our child's diet. Does what a child eat actually have an impact on their emotional responses?

[00:37:15] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** A hungry child can be more temperamental. I'm sure you agree with me. Uh, nutrition is very important to cap irritability or impatient and, you know, dietician talk about, and doctors will tell you about low, low iron levels that impacts on, you know, how you body response to certain things and on, on the mood, um, also on anxiety and depression.

[00:37:40] Um, like food such as they'll tell you about rich iron foods that, you know, have somehow balance your hormones or, uh, other, other, uh, chemicals in your body that can also create, you know, stability somehow in your body and food that, um, I think it's important to know [00:38:00] about the basics of food that, uh, that keep your child satiated for longer.

[00:38:04] Like for instance, dieticians will tell you about complex carbohydrates. That that you feed your, that you, or that you feed, um, your body, that they help the sugar levels, you know, stabilize for longer. So I think, eh, fibre rich food or complex hydrates are important to consider when, um, you know, looking into your child diet to work on or on their mood, feed your child consistently.

[00:38:32] And watch out for the tantrums. If they disappear or if they subside, then you will know that maybe part of what I think a parent should do is, should take care of the child's diet because sometimes children go hungry and they will not tell you they're hungry, they through tantrum. So I think it's important to, you know, uh, balance the meals to give your child nutritious food.

[00:38:56] To give your child's snacks in between so that, you [00:39:00] know, you keep their tummy food. Absolutely.

[00:39:02] **Vanessa Pickford:** Absolutely. And that's obviously where that term 'hangry' comes from the hungry, angry child. So thank you. Right. So you've mentioned how best to help to regulate the child's, um, behaviors through good diet and, and helping them with techniques such as breathing and trying to keep calm, but do different parenting styles actually affect the [00:39:25] frequency Or magnitude of tantrums?

[00:39:26] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** I would like to believe that Vanessa very much so. And I feel caregivers and parents should be more aware of their own, you know, approaches to parenting, uh, because we parent differently depending on how we were parented. I think it's important for, for parent to be aware of.

[00:39:46] You know how they handle children, especially during, those years. There are parents, for instance, that believe that the way to, or raise a child it's when you tell them what to do, and, you know, um, [00:40:00] um, issues you respond when a child is defiant or when a child doesn't want to do something, you punish them.

[00:40:08] And that's the way of correcting. Them that we call an authoritarian style. Meaning it's one way the child has to hear from you or they have to be obedient and you can imagine raising a child like that. Sometimes they maybe defiant or maybe they, if they, they are at, at, at those years of where.

[00:40:28] Display at such behaviors where they, you know, communicate with tantrums and authoritative parent may be more punishing and it may, you know, create that cycle where the child would be more defined cause they would be, um, they won't be allowed to express how they feel. And then there is also a permissive parenting approach or style where, uh, there is, as in the word, says permissive of the child, the parent.

[00:40:57] You know, whatever behaviors the danger [00:41:00] is. If we don't create, you know, sort of reasonable boundaries for

children to know that, uh, they can't go there, they can't get a toy anytime they want sometimes because the child throw the tantrum, the parent gets scared that they might, you know, uh, To go overboard and they, they might do things.

[00:41:20] The child pushes the, the, the, the parent to do things that they wouldn't otherwise do under such circumstances. I think permissive parents, um, are those need to be aware that they should create a balance. Otherwise they're creating a world for the child, uh, where they will think where the children will think that anything goes.

[00:41:42] You know, if they want something, it'll go their way. So you can imagine what kind of a child you would be raising. Uh, if when they throw a tantrum, then they know that something will happen. Children can, can, you know, for lack of a better word can manipulate, you know, [00:42:00] situations. They will know that if I throw myself on the floor, a permissive parent will just run around and get me something that I want. Children have to know limits, have to know boundaries.

[00:42:08] So with permissive, uh, styles, parents should be aware that they should balance theirs yes with their no's, with their correct timing. And so that they teach their children that. They don't get whatever they want time they do. And then there are uninvolved parents, uh, or the, the parenting approach, the, where we can say it's neglectful or uninvolved, neglectful, maybe, maybe a harsh with maybe uninvolved, um, to the child emotional needs.

[00:42:41] And they may display little or new interest in the child. You know what happens to those parents? When a child throws a tantrum, they may not even notice that it's a tantrum because they are not involved, eh, emotionally. And that can create a vicious cycle because children love attention. [00:43:00] Anyway, any human being we love to be attended to when you say something or when you do something, you'd want someone to give you attention.

[00:43:08] So children as human beings, they would also, there will be also those moments when the child, when this child would want your attention. And you can imagine with an uninvolved parent when they don't even notice, when they won't even see that my child needs affection, my child needs a hug. My child needs food.

[00:43:28] Uh, they can create, you know, and, and, and aggravate make the child to respond more with tantrums because the Childs needs won't be met and there is an authoritative what we call authoritative style, uh, the authoritative style or approach to parenting. I feel that it balances more, most of the extremes, this, uh, style of parenting.

[00:43:55] They make an enforce rules, the, the, the parents, but they do that. [00:44:00] Uh, with, uh, all warmth, they show warmth to the children. They establish proper boundaries. Uh, they sit their children, uh, their children down, talk to them about, you know, uh, rules and, uh, talk to them about expectations and, and they, they, they, they create, you know, a healthy environment for children because.

[00:44:22] They, they teach the children that it's not in all instances where things will go their way. Sometimes, Yes. It's a no and sometimes it can be a yes, when there is enough reasons, you know, to allow the child to demand or to request, um, or to look for something from them. So I think, yeah, with those different, um, kinds four different kinds of parenting approaches, I think parents can try and, and get.

[00:44:52] Which style, you know, suits them Uh, or which style depicts them better and maybe looking into [00:45:00] adjusting their style to be the one that their children will be able to, you know, to develop to the Optimum.

[00:45:08] **Vanessa Pickford:** Right. And I think, let me take this opportunity then to mention that In the event of an emergency or concern for the health of the child, Mediclinic has a 24hr call centre where they are able to speak to a registered nurse and receive medical advice and assistance. The nurse can even arrange for

an ambulance if necessary. The number is 0860 233 333. Why not pause this episode quickly and save this number to your phone so that you can have it on hand in case of an emergency.

[00:45:48] Gosh. Yes, you, you certainly have provided a lot of food for thought concerning how we parent and how parenting style affects our children. Dr. Setsiba, I have [00:46:00] thoroughly enjoyed this interview. Thank you for sharing your valuable advice with us. We have learned so much in this episode. What tantrums are, their causes.

[00:46:09] What the tantrum red flags could be, how to parent in a way that provides a safe space for a child's emotions and, and so much more. I'm sure that you've given our listeners many strategies that they can use to cope with tantrums and big emotions. So thank you. It was a pleasure to interview you today.

[00:46:25] **Dr Happy Setsiba:** It was my greatest pleasure to be here. Thank you very much.

[00:46:29] **Vanessa Pickford:** Thank you for joining me, Vanessa Pickford, on The HealthWrap podcast, powered by Mediclinic Prime. If you haven't yet done so, subscribe to our podcast channel. You're not going to want to miss out on hearing the latest parenting and healthcare advice from our experts as we chat with them in the coming episodes. In episode 4 , I'll be talking to psychologist Bettie Rall about school readiness. And, if you'd like more health insights and tips brought right to you in your inbox, then sign-up for our informative Mediclinic Prime newsletter called YOUR FAMILY; you'll find a link for the newsletter in the show notes of this podcast.