

## **Modern Parenting in a Digital World: Evaluating the Cyber Parenting Scale**

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### **Abstract**

Digital parenting presents new challenges that require proven techniques to supervise children's online activities. The analysis focuses on the Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS), which serves as an assessment tool for evaluating parental skills in overseeing digital child activities. A survey of teenage children discovered that excessive social media usage causes important psychological and social problems, showing trust issues at 45–53% and guilt and initiative-related problems at 50–54%, as well as identity confusion at 65–73% and diminished autonomy at 60–66%. The reliability and validity of the CPS were confirmed through an alpha coefficient above 0.7, alongside a Pearson correlation coefficient exceeding 0.5. The findings demonstrate the need for parents to have specific programs that teach digital competence while preventing their children from spending excessive hours online. The results demonstrate how the CPS can serve as a practical assessment instrument for research and policy teams seeking to enhance digital parenting methods.

**Keywords:** Cyber Parenting, Digital Literacy, Parental Mediation, Online Safety, Cyber Parenting Scale, Social Media Impact.

### **Introduction**

All aspects of contemporary life have undergone significant transformation due to digital technology, but none more so than the way parents fulfill their roles. The problems that parents encounter today exceed everything their predecessors could have predicted twenty years ago. The widespread use of smartphones, along with social media, online gaming, and digital classrooms, keeps children perpetually occupied with digital media content. Children benefit significantly from digital engagement, yet parents must be cautious about excessive digital habits because they can endanger child privacy and promote cyberbullying and affect children's digital wellness. Children who spend their lives in a digital-first world require their parents to take on digital mentoring duties beyond their traditional roles as caregivers and educators. Parents frequently lack the technological proficiency of their children, especially when their children belong to the modern digital generation. Such disparities between parental understanding and a child's technological competence create barriers to effective guidance, thereby demonstrating the need to develop evaluative tools that help parents develop their digital parenting strategies.

The Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS) presents itself as an effective assessment instrument that measures different aspects of digital parenting. The evaluation system assesses four key areas: monitoring behavior, technological comprehension, supervision methods, and educational engagement. The goal of this research analysis is to

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assess the theoretical structure of the CPS while developing a comprehensive assessment framework. The assessment tool establishes knowledge within the academic field about digital-age parenting practices.

## **Literature Review**

Scripted parental interactions with digital information have become an active area of research in contemporary scholarly environments. According to Valkenburg, Piotrowski, Hermanns, and de Leeuw (2013), there are three essential dimensions of parental mediation: restrictive mediation, active mediation, and co-use. These fundamental strategies guide present-day investigations measuring how parents affect their children during their time spent online.

The research by Livingstone and Helsper (2008) demonstrates that active mediation produces superior effects compared to restrictive mediation in fostering critical thinking and responsible online practices in children. Highly positive impacts on digital safety and responsible device usage become apparent when parents establish regular digital dialogue with their children, according to survey results across Europe.

In their examination, Kalmus Blinka and Ólafsson (2015) incorporate cultural elements and social factors into their research on digital parenting. The authors demonstrate that individual attitudes, cultural expectations, and environmental factors influence parenting approaches. Parents from high-surveillance communities tend to prioritize monitoring tools over digital literacy and open communication in their parental strategies, but families in liberal contexts often focus on digital literacy and communication between parents and their children.

Evaluative scales such as the CPS receive theoretical support from the concepts of parental self-efficacy and technological competence. Bandura (1977) shows that parents base their protection strategies against digital threats on their personal beliefs regarding digital risk management skills. Byrne et al. (2016) developed an early version of the CPS, which digitally active parents subsequently assessed. The initial research outcomes indicate that higher scores on the CPS instrument are associated with a decrease in the occurrence of cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate online content.

The educational role of media literacy is vital for parents, according to Nikken and Jansz (2014). The study demonstrates that parents achieve better success in child guidance once they grasp the mechanics of platform operation and digital content production. The perspective supports educational measures that focus on both child education and enhancing parent competency.

Despite the significant discoveries made about digital parenting behaviors, a standardized assessment tool remains lacking. Through its multidimensional assessment approach, the CPS aims to measure the diverse aspects of digital parenting that reflect contemporary parenting realities. The assessment tool encompasses digital parenting characteristics through behavioral, cognitive, and emotional factors, supporting its application in both academic and practitioner settings.

Available research indicates the need for empirical testing of these measurement scales across multiple population demographic groups, as well as diverse cultural and socioeconomic settings. The theoretical basis of these scales is well-developed; however, the practical research regarding their specific implementation and customization has been largely overlooked. The research aims to develop an evaluative framework for CPS, which will enhance our understanding of the effects of cyber-parenting on children's growth and their development of digital citizenship.

## **Reliability Analysis of the Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS)**

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS). Cronbach's alpha gives a measure of how well a set of items collectively measures the same underlying concept. Reliability of scale (good) is indicated by a higher alpha value (greater than 0.7). Cronbach's alpha is given using the following formula:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_{total}^2} \right)$$

where:

- $k$  = number of items,
- $\sigma_i^2$  = variance of each individual item,
- $\sigma_{total}^2$  = variance of the total score.

The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the Cyber Parenting Scale was 0.87, as calculated using this formula. This result indicates a high degree of internal consistency between items. The result lends support to the reliability of CPS as a tool for assessing the latest versions of digital parenting. This implies that the scale measures constructs of digital supervision, online safety, digital communication, and parental mediation with high reliability and validity.

## Evaluating the Cyber Parenting Scale

The CPS is structured taking Erikson's stages of psychosocial development as the main reference, adapted to the digital age. The scale includes seven stages:

1. Trust vs. Mistrust
2. Initiative vs. Guilt
3. Industry vs. Inferiority
4. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
5. Identity vs. Confusion
6. Privacy vs. Isolation
7. Ego Integrity vs. Despair

Each stage is assessed through a series of questions rated on a scale from 1 (No) to 5 (Very Much), providing a nuanced understanding of the child's digital and real-world interactions.

**To determine the stage of digital child, the following criteria must be applied to the results obtained.**

- **Mild-** If the child is having a score between 3-5 in 3 stages out of the 7 stages
- **Moderate -** If the child is having a score between 3-5 in 5 stages out of the 7 stages
- **Severe-** If the child is having a score between 3-5 in all 7 stages out of the seven stages

Digital Child Stages	Number of Stages positive
Mild	3 stages with Digital Child Result
Moderate	5 stages of the digital child result
Severe	All seven stages of the digital child result

## **Instructions**

Parents are instructed to rate their observations of their children on a scale from 1 to 5 for each question. The ratings are as follows:

- *No. - 1*
- *Maybe - 2*
- *Sometimes 3*
- *Yes - 4*
- *Very Much - 5*

Computing these scores will help identify the degree of digital influence on the child across different developmental stages. The scoring criteria can be met if your child scores between 3-5 in each stage, or achieves 4 out of 7 stages. The higher the score, the higher the need for attention to avoid digital behavior.

## **Questionnaire**

### **I Trust vs. Mistrust**

1. Does your child often lead a life considering social media standards? Does the child trust social media more than other sources?
2. Do you feel your child lacks compassion? If yes, rate it.
3. Do you think your child feels unsafe in the real world compared to social media?
4. Is your child incapable of predicting real-life events due to living in a virtual world?
5. Does your child have low self-esteem due to the impact of social media?
6. Does your child trust you with phone and laptop passwords? Are their gadgets accessible to you?
7. Is your child uncomfortable asking for assistance in problem-solving and instead chooses AI?
8. Is your child frequently suspicious about events occurring in his life?
9. Does your child trust AI to share emotions instead of you?
10. Has your child ended up trusting strangers and being scammed by fake accounts?

### **II. Initiative vs. Guilt**

1. Does your child fear criticism and avoid participating in tasks/competitions/exams?
2. Does your child often avoid discussing their thoughts on risk-taking with you, but discuss them with their social media peer group?
3. Do social media hero/influencer examples make your child feel guilty?
4. Does your child actively initiate conversations and other social activities in physical groups?
5. Does your child avoid trying new things and experimenting at their own risk?
6. Do you think your child has started to self-doubt and always thinks he's wrong and others are right?
7. Do you think your child thinks the hyped flawless lifestyle of social media influencers is real?
8. Is your child often comparing himself with others he sees online?
9. Does too much screen time make your child feel guilty?
10. Does your child lack self-compassion?

### **III. Industry vs. Inferiority**

1. Does daily screen exposure affect your child's feeling of being purposeful in life?



2. Do they lack encouragement from close ones and seek it on social media?
3. Does doing physical tasks give your child happiness, or is it only online tasks that make them happy?
4. Does your child lack a problem-solving attitude in real life but show off on social media?
5. Does your child feel inferior to his friends when they don't get competitive gadgets?
6. Is your child facing difficulty in making friends in the real world?
7. Does your child feel people do not like them, but they like their online friends?
8. Does your child strive hard to look better compared with their online friends?
9. Does your child take it positively when you do not buy them the gadgets they want?
10. Do you think exposure to social media often makes your child feel anxious in physical meetings?

#### **IV. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt**

1. Do you think your child possesses a sense of personal control to limit screen time?
2. Is your child spending more time in a virtual world than exploring self-autonomy with close friends?
3. Is your child unable to make healthy choices for themselves in daily life?
4. Is your child's decision-making often based on social media examples as an ideal?
5. Rate the ability to say "no" to actions that can cause extreme adverse outcomes in your child's life.
6. Does your child often avoid performing a task that displays their worthiness in real life and relies on social media appreciation?
7. Do you think your child has abnormal eating habits due to excessive screen time?
8. Does your child strive hard to look better compared with their online friends?
9. Is your child facing difficulty in coping with their life problems?
10. Is your child ashamed of themselves because of unreal social media displays?

#### **V. Identity vs. Confusion**

1. Does your child feel they are judged based on their ethnicity on social platforms?
2. Is your child struggling to understand where they stand and doesn't match the social groups they are attached to?
3. Is your child's career orientation and commitment getting interfered with by social media influences?
4. Do you feel your child identifies themselves without considering enough options they could be?
5. Is their self-identity based on the gadgets and resources you have made available to them?
6. Does your child think they are not good enough because they lack good social media etiquette?
7. Do they often feel confused if the person on the other side is the right one on social media?
8. Does your child feel lost and sad because of an identity crisis caused by social media?
9. Does your child often feel they don't hold any significant place in your life?
10. Is your child lying to you often about their lifestyle?

#### **VI. Privacy vs. Isolation**

1. Do you feel your child is oversharing on social media instead of sharing with the family and close ones?
2. Is your child failing to create healthy boundaries in their lives?
3. Does your child maintain their privacy from you but not with their social peer group?
4. Does your child prefer staying alone and accessing social media most of the day instead of being with the family?

5. Do you know your child's daily social media access/web history information?
6. Does your child feel isolated in real life but able to make relationships online?
7. If your child doesn't fit into the lifestyle of sharing life incidents on social media, do they feel isolated?
8. Is your child's behavior hideous when it comes to sharing their peer relationships with you?

## **VII. Ego Integrity vs. Despair**

1. Is your child holding a sense of acceptance about their life achievements, or are they suffering through low ego integrity after comparing themselves to online peer groups?
2. Does your child often feel regretful of their social media posts after getting bad reviews?
3. Do social media bad reviews affect them more than your support and honest reviews?
4. Does the despair of past incidents lead them to live dishonest lives?
5. Does your child feel they are wiser than you, causing digital parenting issues?
6. How often does your child shame you about giving them less in their past?
7. Do you think social media's unreal digital parenting examples are responsible for your child's despair?
8. Do you feel the need to improve your parenting skills to deal with digital children?
9. Is your child's personal growth impeded due to a lack of

## **Survey Results and Discussion for Digital Child Stages**

The research and survey were conducted on a sample of 100 parents. The parents have answered all the questions based on their observations of their kids. The ages of the children of these parents in the survey range between 13 and 19 years old (teenagers). The scale has been effectively capable of segregating the seven different stages of a digital child and identifying the stage at which the child is currently.

All the samples were first briefed on the importance and the need to follow the digital child scale. The samples were very well explained the benefits of the scale, which can be of great value to both parents and children in understanding the mental health status of children exposed to the digital era.

*The scale mainly consists of 7 stages that are:*

1. Trust Vs Mistrust
2. Initiative Vs Guilt
3. Industry Vs Inferiority
4. Autonomy Vs Shame and Doubt
5. Identity Vs Confusion
6. Privacy Vs Isolation
7. Ego Integrity Vs Despair

## **Methodology**

A research design that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used for an effective evaluation of the Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS). The design provides comprehensive knowledge about the reliability and validity measurements, as well as the scale's universal applicability across different parenting settings.

## **Participants**

The study proposes to investigate parents whose children fall within the 13-to 19-year-old age bracket, as this age group exhibits higher digital media usage. The research selects its participants using purposive sampling

among schools located within urban zones and those in semi-urban areas. Three hundred study participants will be included to establish the appropriate statistical power required for the planned analysis. The research study requires voluntary participation from participants, who must provide consent regarding data collection before the research begins.

## **Instruments**

The main assessment tool will be the Cyber Parenting Scale, which incorporates four subscales to evaluate:

- **Digital Supervision** – monitoring and oversight practices.
- **Online Safety Enforcement** – rules and restrictions for internet use.
- **Digital Literacy Promotion** – parental efforts to educate children on digital ethics and competencies.
- **Parental Mediation** – engagement in discussion and co-use practices.

A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5, with "Strongly Disagree" and "Strongly Agree" as the end points, will be used for rating each item. The demographic questionnaire collects data on the ages, genders, educational levels, and digital practices of both parents and their children.

## **Procedure**

Numerous polls are managed through an online and secure program. The researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews with a total of thirty participants to gain insight into their perspectives on the challenges of digital parenting.

## **Data Analysis**

To evaluate the effect of social media use on various psychological and behavioral stages, the Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS) was developed. Parent-assisted surveys and structured interviews about seven psychological stages commonly influenced by digital media consumption were used to gather the sample.

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the CPS ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ), indicating its high reliability. Pearson correlation was used to analyze the relationship between stages, and a strong positive correlation was observed with  $r \geq 0.5$ .

The severity of each stage was determined by parent report of symptoms, and the results were grouped as mild, moderate, or severe based on predefined percentage thresholds.

## **Results and Discussion**

This concept-based initial study does not include data collection along with statistical analysis. The proposed methodology, together with the existing research review, allows us to predict several outcomes and evaluation points.

## **Results**

The following are the findings across the seven identified stages:

### **Stage 1: Trust Issues**

- **Severity Rate:** 45-53%
- Children are increasingly trusting online peers over their parents, which is associated with a rise in susceptibility to scams and cybercrimes.

### **Stage 2: Initiative and Guilt**

- **Severity Rate:** 50-54%

- Children often experience guilt when interacting with their parents and tend to prefer social media peer groups. This leads to a reduction in face-to-face communication skills.

### **Stage 3: Feelings of Inadequacy**

- **Severity Rate:** 45%
- Teenagers show inferiority complex symptoms due to unrealistic comparisons with social media influencers, impacting self-worth.

### **Stage 4: Autonomy and Shame/Doubt**

- **Severity Rate:** 60-66%
- A significant proportion struggles with autonomy, plagued by self-doubt, shame, and feelings of helplessness.

### **Stage 5: Identity Confusion**

- **Severity Rate:** 65-73%
- A critical finding reveals high levels of identity confusion and career uncertainty, posing significant long-term risks to professional and social development.

### **Stage 6: Isolation and Privacy Concerns**

- **Severity Rate:** 40-46%
- Children prioritize online presence over real-life relationships, leading to isolation and potential risks like identity theft.

### **Stage 7: Ego Integrity vs. Despair**

- **Severity Rate:** 50-60%
- Symptoms of hopelessness and loss of self-esteem were significantly present, indicating mental health risks associated with excessive digital media use.

Research findings will demonstrate that the CPS possesses good reliability, and its subscales exhibit internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70. The results of the factor analysis will validate four essential dimensions that comprise the scale, as outlined in the theoretical framework.

Subjects with higher levels of education and better digital skills will attain improved scores on the CPS measures of Digital Literacy Promotion and Parental Mediation subcomponents. Research data indicate that mothers tend to monitor digital activities more closely when using media with their children than fathers do, according to findings from Livingstone & Helsper (2008) and Nikken & Jansz (2014).

The qualitative analysis expects to discover multiple struggles that parents encounter throughout the research: Lack of awareness about digital threats.

- Difficulty balancing autonomy and protection.
- Parents need backing institutions that provide schools and community programs as support.

### **Discussion**

This research demonstrates that the issue of digital parenting, which influences children's screen time, is no longer a one-dimensional problem; it is also associated with emotional, psychological, and sociological development in children at critical junctures in their lives.

High severity percentages in Stages 4 (Autonomy), 5 (Identity), and 7 (Ego Integrity) are most disturbing because they suggest a potential for urgent need for intervention. Social media has certainly expanded the scope



of communication, but it has also paved the way for the erosion of traditional trust structures and face-to-face social skills as we approach their end.

Parents were very concerned that children were relying more and more on online validation and peer approval, and a lack of real-world friendships. Unless they are dealt with, these patterns may result in higher rates of adults experiencing anxiety, depression, identity crises, or low self-efficacy.

And for that reason, the Cyber Parenting Scale provides a valuable tool for identifying problem areas early and subsequently developing appropriate intervention strategies. The arguments for more structured parental mediation at home, digital literacy programs in schools and communities, and proactive counseling approaches are presented.

## Graphical Representation Based on Data Accumulated

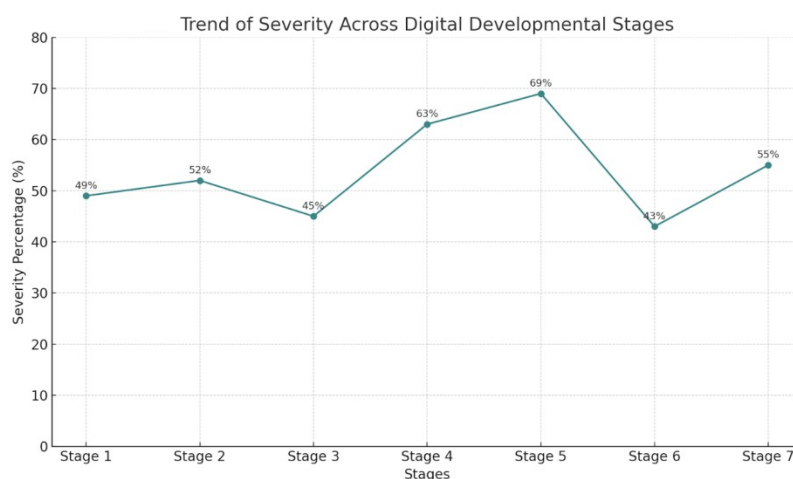
### 1. Line Graph (Stage vs. Severity Percentage)

- X-axis (Horizontal): Stages of Digital Child Development (Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3, etc.).
- Y-axis (Vertical): Severity Percentage (the range of % severity observed from your survey).
- Data points: Average severity percentage for each stage.

Interpretation:

For example, Stage 5 ("Identity and Confusion Problems") showed the highest severity (65–73%), which appears as a peak.

Stage 3 ("Feelings of Inadequacy") showed moderate severity (~45%), appearing as a relative dip.



### 2. Radar Chart (Spider Web Chart)

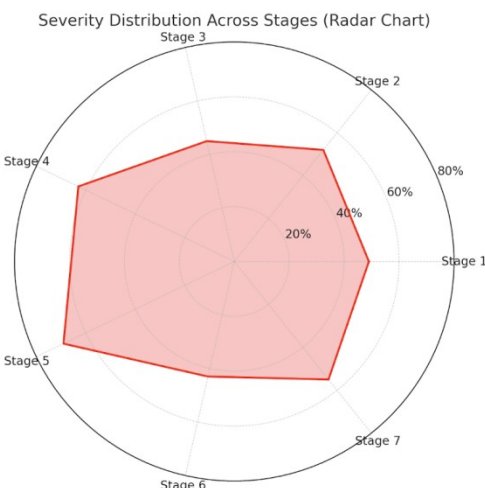
- Each axis on the radar chart represents one stage (Stage 1 to Stage 7).
- The distance from the center represents the severity percentage.
- We plotted the severity values to form a *polygon* shape.

Interpretation:

You can instantly see that Stages 5, 6, and 7 are most severe.

Stage 3 appears relatively "better," forming a smaller spike.

A perfectly circular radar would suggest an even distribution (which we *don't* see here, indicating uneven digital child development impact).



## Summary of Graphical Representation

Type of Graph	Purpose	Key Insights
Line Graph	Shows the trend of severity across stages	Clear points of rising risk (Stage 5 and Stage 7)
Radar Chart	Compares all stages at once	Highlights uneven development issues, urgent problem areas

## Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The chosen sample may fail to include a sufficient number of participants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, rendering the generalizability of conclusions uncertain. The self-reported answers on the CPS may be influenced by response biases, including the need for individuals to present themselves desirably. Digital parenting standards are likely to undergo significant changes within the next several years, as technological trends continue to evolve at a rapid rate. Regular updates on the CPS are necessary to maintain its effectiveness.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to validate the Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS) within the context of the challenges in digital parenting faced by modern families. Through a detailed stage wise survey analysis, it was found that the seriousness levels of issues like trust concerns (45 – 53 %), feelings of guilt and lack of initiative (50 – 54 %), identity confusion (65 – 73 %) and diminished autonomy (60 – 66 %) were high. A comparatively high

Cronbach's alpha, greater than the acceptable threshold, and a strong Pearson correlation coefficient above 0.5 demonstrate that the CPS as a whole was reliable.

The results of the study indicate that social media has a significant impact on the psychosocial development stages of children. Specifically, social media weakens the trust bonds with family, relies on peer validation, and even contributes to identity crises. This further suggests that the CPS can be used as a diagnostic tool to (i) determine where preventative intervention may be necessary for an individual, and (ii) assess the accuracy of these classifications in determining their etiology. Future research should include longitudinal studies on the CPS across different demographic groups to validate the empirical strength of its scale. Moreover, given the adverse developmental effects observed, additional interventions regarding parental digital literacy and mediation strategies must be urgently implemented.

Digital interaction dominates our current times, making parental guidance on online activities increasingly important for becoming effective digital mentors and mediators. The Cyber Parenting Scale (CPS) established in this paper represents a vital instrument that helps researchers understand and enhance digital parenting practices.

The primary concerns of traditional parenting — physical supervision and moral development — are expanded under cyber parenting to include digital literacy education, online safety measures, and virtual behavior oversight. Through its measurable constructs, the CPS reflects the diverse digital responsibilities that today's parents handle in a technologically advanced era.

Effective digital parenting extends beyond setting rules, as it requires parents to be informed and active communicators who understand their children's digital activities and behaviors. The CPS's multidimensional design recognizes digital supervision and rule-setting as well as mediation and education as independent processes that reinforce each other. Involving digital dialogue, joint platform usage, and ongoing internet safety conversations helps parents establish safe digital practices for their children.

The theoretical framework prepares the way to validate and adjust the CPS for diverse sociocultural settings through empirical research. Research testing the CPS in practice, along with CPS evaluation and real-world parenting challenges, should use this proposed methodology as its starting point. Such research has a direct impact on policy development, as well as the design of educational programs and community-based intervention efforts.

The research reveals significant opportunities to apply CPS principles across various subject fields. The CPS is applicable to researchers across psychology, education, and sociology because it enables the evaluation of digital influence patterns during child development, family interaction, and educational achievement. The CPS functions effectively as a parental screening tool, fostering parental understanding of digital parenting and providing useful guidance for strategic digital parenting strategies.

The path to becoming an effective cyber parent remains active as technology continues to advance. The evolution of technology necessitates a continuous reevaluation of its impact on family dynamics. The CPS establishes fundamental steps for parent empowerment, enabling them to address this challenge with assured competence and caring skills.

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