

The Role of Self-Care: How Parental Wellbeing Impacts Family Mental Health

Mental Health Series



Why is self-care for parents so important?

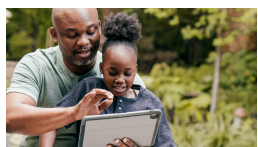
Taking care of yourself is just as important as taking care of your family. When you feel physically and mentally healthy, you're better equipped to be the best parent possible. So give yourself the care and attention you deserve, and watch as your entire family reaps the benefits. Here are some key reasons why self-care for parents is so essential.



Physical Health. Taking care of your body through nutrition, exercise, and rest is critical in maintaining your health and energy levels, enabling you to be more effective and present as a parent.



Mental Health. Parenting takes emotional and mental effort! Practicing self-care can ease the stress and anxiety that could harm mental health in the long run.



Role Modeling. Teach your children the importance of taking care of themselves as they grow and mature by setting a positive example of prioritizing your self-care. Developing healthy habits and attitudes can start at a young age.



Better Parenting. You are better equipped to handle the challenges of parenting when you are well-rested, follow a balanced lifestyle, and are in good physical and mental health. Self-care is an investment in your parenting ability.

Tips for what to do when you're "running on empty."

Every morning when you wake up, spend one minute in bed deciding what you are going to do for yourself that day. Start small - promise yourself just 15 minutes a day. You'll soon see the rewards of a little bit of "me" time.

Ideas for meeting your Physical Needs:

- Go for a walk outdoors - on your own, or with your child.
- Take a hot shower, or a long bath.

Ideas for meeting your Emotional Needs:

- Find things that make you laugh
- Prioritize the activities that make you happy.

Ideas for meeting your Intellectual Needs:

- Return to old hobbies you may not have pursued since becoming a parent.
- Listen to podcasts or audiobooks while you drive or work around the house

Ideas for meeting your Spiritual Needs:

- Meditate or pray each morning, or each evening
- Be open to inspiration and awe.



Featured Articles

Strategies for Integrating Self-Care into Your Parenting Routine

- **Schedule Time for Yourself:** Planning time in advance for activities you enjoy and find rejuvenating makes it more likely you'll follow through with your self-care activities.
- **Maintain a Healthy Diet:** Eating well-balanced meals can help you maintain your energy levels. A diet rich in lean protein, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats can help you keep up with your children's needs.
- **Exercise Regularly:** Find a type of exercise you enjoy, such as walking, dancing, swimming or jogging and make it part of your routine. Physical activity is great for your mental health too!
- **Prioritize Sleep:** As much as we would like to think otherwise, without sleep we cannot maintain energy levels and overall well-being. Sleep quality is affected by caffeine, heavy meals, and electronic devices before bedtime.
- **Ask for Help:** Reach out to friends, family members, or even a professional if you are feeling overwhelmed. Discussing your feelings can help alleviate stress.

Setting the Standard: Why Parents Should Model Self-Care

As parents, modeling self-care shows other adults its' importance and reinforces it for yourself. Prioritizing your well-being encourages friends and family to do the same, fostering a supportive community.

Practicing self-care also reminds you that your health is crucial, helping you stay resilient and balanced. By taking care of yourself, you set a strong example for others, benefiting everyone.



For helpful parenting resources visit: [ParentGuidance.org](https://parentguidance.org)

- **Foster Social Connections:** Maintaining friendships and social connections ease feelings of isolation. Emotional support can come from regular catch-ups with friends or community events to stay connected.
- **Celebrate Your Accomplishments:** Take time to really celebrate your achievements, both big and small. Recognizing your successes can boost your self-esteem and provide motivation to set your sights on your next self-care milestone.
- **Practice Self-Compassion:** Be kind to yourself, acknowledging that parenting is a challenging journey. Treat yourself with the same understanding and compassion you would offer a friend in a similar situation. This can help decrease feelings of inadequacy or guilt and promote a healthier mindset.

“I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self-indulgent.

Caring for myself is an act of survival.”

-Audre Lorde



Take a no-cost course at [ParentGuidance.org](https://parentguidance.org)

Sometimes the experiences of life can make us feel like we've lost our way. We forget our worth, our potential, our identity. Our problems become so overwhelming that we can't see anything else.

Finding Yourself When You're Feeling Lost

[Begin Course](#)

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Works Cited

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