



Family Matters

Making Family Life Easier

Parents taking care of themselves

Being a parent brings great happiness and pleasure, however it is also one of the most stressful and demanding jobs there is. Parents can devote much of their time and energy into taking care of their children and juggling the many demands placed upon them. While doing this they often neglect to take care of themselves and their own needs. Add to this the pressures of modern day living and over time parents can become stressed and burnt out.

While many parents believe that sacrificing their own needs and mental health is in the best interest of their children, in the long run it does not serve their children well. Children need parents who can take care of them and to do this, parents need to take care of themselves. It's similar to when the air hostess on the plane tells parents to put their own oxygen masks on before helping their child put theirs on; parents need to take care of their needs and mental health as well as the needs of their children.

Some daily self-care tips

In our hectic and stress filled world it is a good idea for family life and for parents to find ways of managing stress. Try incorporating some of the following into your daily routine:

- Take a break-It could be a five-minute pause from cleaning to have a cup of tea, or listen to your favourite song or a brisk walk to the nearby shop A few minutes can be enough to de-stress you.
- Have a daily relaxation time for yourself that you keep to; it could be a short walk, yoga or 20 mins reading before bed, whatever works for you. In our fast paced world parents will often say they do not have the time for long meditations, however the following 3 minute mindfulness exercise can bring about a sense of calmness and relaxation:
 1. In a quiet place, sit comfortably, with your eyes closed.
 2. Bring your attention to your breathing. Notice how you breathe in and breathe out
 3. When thoughts, emotions, physical feelings or external sounds occur, simply notice and accept them without getting involved with them.
 4. When you notice that your attention is drifting off and becoming caught up in thoughts or feelings, gently bring your attention back to your breathing.
- Keep in touch with your friends and family - They can help keep you active, keep you grounded and help you solve practical problems.

Finally if you feel stress is becoming a serious problem for you, take action and get the necessary support.

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