Self Care for Parents

Stress causes wear and tear on a person, inside and out. When you take time for self-care, you are better able to care for your child—and even a few minutes of “you time” can help you recharge so that you can parent at your best. Remember, you are doing a great job by doing the best you can. Keep these tips in mind when you’re feeling overwhelmed:

**Stay (virtually) social.** Spending more time at home than usual can take a toll. Reach out to loved ones and friends with a phone call or video chat. Keeping social distance from others doesn’t mean you need to go it alone.

**Sleep.** When your little one lays down to rest, try to do the same. If he’s having trouble settling down, sing him a quiet song that you loved when you were small, one that calms you down, too.

**Take a ten-minute vacation.** As you’re bathing your child, soak your hands in the warm water and give yourself a little massage, taking long deep breaths as you do so. Or take a break by listening to a favorite song, reading a few pages of a new book, or doing some energizing stretches.

**Keep a journal by your bed.** Before you fall asleep, remember something funny, kind, or surprising that your child did today. Write a few lines that capture the memory. If you are feeling down, you can read through your memory journal.

**Fill your cup.** Get a nice big glass of water and find a comfy spot to sit. Let your child know, “I’m just going to sit and (read/think/breathe) while I drink this glass of water.” Explain that you’ll be available once the glass is empty. Children have difficulty keeping track of time—this is a concrete way to help them understand that you are taking a few minutes to yourself.

**Turn on the tunes!** Never underestimate the power of music to change the mood. Put together a playlist of songs that make you feel good. You might create different playlists for different moods (one to relax, one to energize, and so on).

**Get moving.** Taking movement breaks throughout the day can help alleviate stress and keep you well. Even if you’re stuck inside, try a few small-space, body-weight exercises like squats, lunges, arm-raises or yoga.