



Self Care for Parents

As a parent, it's important that you take care of yourself! If you're like most moms and dads, you need to be told that it's okay to do things for yourself. Practicing self care is an important step to becoming a better parent.

“Self Care” includes the simple, physical things but it also includes more psychological, social and even spiritual time for ourselves:

DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR PHYSICAL SELF?

- Eat regularly in healthy ways
- Get exercise
- Receive regular, preventive medical care
- Sleep enough
- Take time away from the phone, email, TV, etc.
- Spend time outdoors in fresh air and natural light

DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL/EMOTIONAL SELF?

- Spend time and stay in touch with friends & family
- Express emotions, allow yourself to cry, talk about feelings
- Find activities that make you happy or relaxed
- Work on your marriage or other relationships
- Say no to extra responsibilities

DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR CREATIVE/SPIRITUAL SELF?

- Give yourself quiet time for self-reflection
- Attend a local place of worship
- Write in a journal
- Spend time out in nature
- Enjoy a hobby or learn something new

What happens to a **PARENT** when he or she neglects self care?

Parents often feel pressured to give so much to our children that we forget to take care of ourselves, or we feel guilty for taking care of ourselves.

When ANYONE neglects to take care of him or herself, they put stress on their mind and body. This stress can lead to physical effects like a weaker immune system and high blood pressure, but it can also lead to mental effects such as depression and anger management issues.

What happens to a **CHILD** when a parent neglects self care?

We teach our kids that it's okay to neglect things like healthy eating habits, respecting our bodies and relationships with partners are not important. Plus, parenting can become an even greater challenge than it already is! It takes ENERGY to be a good parent. When we're not taking care of ourselves, we can be irritable, exhausted or sad. But positive, proactive parenting takes patience, energy and optimism. **If we don't take care of ourselves, it becomes even more difficult to care for our children.**

It's okay to ask for help: Sometimes practicing self care - especially in the beginning - means asking other adults for help. Getting another adult to support you in self care can be a big help in making it a permanent part of your life!