



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 take time to take care of yourself. Practicing self care is actually a very important step to becoming a better parent.

Self care includes the simplest, physical things - like making sure we get enough sleep and eating healthy meals. But it also includes more emotional, social, psychological, creative/artistic and even spiritual time for ourselves. **Ask yourself if you do the following for YOURSELF:**

PHYSICAL SELF CARE:

- 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

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF CARE:

- Spend time with friends and family
- Stay in touch with others
- Express emotions, allow yourself to cry and find things that make you happy
- Read for pleasure (not work)
- Work on your marriage or other relationships
- Say no to extra responsibilities

ARTISTIC/CREATIVE/SPIRITUAL SELF CARE:

- 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/she neglects self care?

As parents, we often feel so pressured to give so much to our children that we forget to take care of ourselves, or we even feel guilty for taking care of ourselves. This is simply unreasonable!

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 self care, and that 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 over-stressed and not taking care of ourselves, we can be irritable, exhausted or sad. But positive, proactive parenting takes patience, energy and optimism. So on top of not taking care of ourselves, we cannot care for our children as we might otherwise be able to.

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!