

Mindful Minute

A Mental Health Resource for Parents

VOLUME 11

Caring for the Caregiver

During stressful seasons, caregivers often go into survival mode. This can look like caring for everyone else while ignoring their own needs. But a family's strength starts with calm and emotionally healthy caregivers. Self-care isn't "being extra" it's a practical strategy that protects your patience, judgment, and ability to show up for your children.

Begin with simple, consistent habits that support your nervous system: regular sleep, balanced meals, movement, and hydration. These small anchors have a large impact on mood and stress tolerance. Pair these with a daily "pause practice." You can do this by taking a two- to five-minute moment to breathe, stretch, step outside, or check in with yourself. Short, repeated breaks help your body shift back into steadiness.

Emotional self-care is just as important. Notice your internal signals: tension, irritability, emotional exhaustion, or feeling disconnected. These cues aren't failures; they're invitations to slow down or ask for support. Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or community group. Sharing the load, even briefly, reduces isolation and gives you space to reset.

Finally, don't hesitate to seek professional support when stress becomes ongoing. Talking with a counselor can help you process what you're carrying and develop coping strategies tailored to your life. Prioritizing your mental health sets a powerful example for your children. It teaches them that caring for yourself is part of caring for the people you love.

When caregivers invest in their well-being, the whole family becomes more adaptable, connected, and strong- especially during the seasons that test them the most.

Self-Care

Parenting can be stressful and has its ups and downs. As a parent, it's important to take care of your own mental health so you can handle those ups and downs and be your best self for your kids and for yourself.

Keeping up with the never-ending laundry and cleaning, while managing a busy schedule with work, school, and activities, can affect your mental health. Learning to manage priorities is key. Decide what is urgent, what can wait, and what can be shared with others. Keep a family calendar and show your kids how to use it so they can learn to prioritize important things too.

Spending time away from the kids to do something just for grownups is allowed! Let the



kids spend an evening with a relative or swap babysitting with a friend, and take a break from parenting to do something fun for yourself. You will come back more relaxed and be a better parent if you take a little "me time."

Invest in your mental health by getting your own therapist. Parenting is hard work and can

be emotionally tiring. Having a therapist can help you manage your feelings and be more in control as a parent. When your family sees you taking care of yourself, they will realize you are a good example of making mental health a priority.

Communication Strategies

Strength-based parenting uses communication that focuses on a child's strengths while building confidence and resilience. Parents can begin by listening closely and showing real interest in their child's thoughts and feelings. This helps create a safe and supportive space. Instead of focusing only on problems, parents can ask solution-focused questions like, "What strengths can you use here?" or "What worked well last time?"

Pointing out specific positive behaviors helps children see what they are good at. Using teamwork language like, "Let's figure this out together." encourages cooperation and confidence. Regularly talking about successes, no matter how small, helps children believe they can grow and improve. Overall, communication that is respectful, encouraging, and focused on strengths helps children feel valued and capable, while also strengthening the parent-child relationship.



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Family Bonding Activity

Families can practice strengths-based parenting by choosing activities that show off each person's abilities. Cooking a meal together lets each family member take a role that fits their strengths, whether it's chopping, measuring, or setting the table. Nature walks can also be a great way to bond while talking about things each person felt proud of that week.

Parents can model teamwork with activities everyone can do together, like puzzles or building something small. These activities can help children feel proud, build self-esteem, and practice new skills. Sharing highlights from the week gives children a chance to be seen and talk about their successes. Spending time together while noticing each person's strengths can build confidence, improve communication, and help families celebrate what makes each individual shine.

Helpful Resources

