

I Deserve Self-Care

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Resilience is the flexibility and inner strength to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience are better able to protect their children from stress and can help children learn critical self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

All parents have strengths and resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication, problem-solving, caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access needed services.

Self-care is important, but it is only part of the picture. Families experiencing multiple life stressors—such as a history of trauma, health concerns, marital conflict, substance use, or community violence—and financial stressors—such as unemployment, financial insecurity, or homelessness—face more challenges coping effectively with typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

Addressing stressors in the family, community, and society will ultimately create stronger, more resilient families.

Key Points to Cover With Families

Parenting is stressful, and some situations are more difficult than others.

Too much stress can make it harder to parent effectively.

- **Ask:** *What do you notice when you are under a lot of stress? How is your parenting affected when you are stressed?*
- Share some common effects of stress—such as changes in eating or sleeping habits or feelings of depression or hopelessness—if they are having trouble coming up with ideas.

Stress affects children, too.

- Talk with caregivers about how children can pick up on family stress and show many of the same signs.
- **Ask:** *How can you tell when your child is feeling stressed?*

Everyone has strengths that they draw on during difficult times.

- **Ask:** *What kinds of things do you do to take care of yourself and manage stress?*
- Encourage them to circle items on the guide or write their own answers in the category where they fit.
- Then, prompt caregivers to think of and record other self-care strategies that they could use, would like to use, or have seen others use.
- **Ask:** *What is one new self-care activity you can commit to this week?*

More resources on building [parental resilience](#) can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website. The [National Parent Helpline](#) may also be a valuable resource for families.

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CONVERSATION GUIDE

When I am feeling stressed, I can:

Mind

- Watch something that makes me laugh
- Write down my thoughts
- Do something creative (draw, work on a puzzle, sing, etc.)
- _____
- _____

Spirit

- Spend time outdoors
- Meditate or pray
- Connect with my faith community (church, mosque, temple, etc.)
- _____
- _____
- _____

Body

- Have a cup of coffee or tea
- Take a nap
- Walk, stretch, or exercise
- _____
- _____
- _____

Community

- Play a game with my children
- Spend time with family or friends
- Connect to my local parent-teacher association or other support group
- _____
- _____

One thing I will do this week to care for myself is ...