

# Self-Care for Parents and Caregivers



## Why Self-Care?

Being a parent or caregiver is a source of joy, pride, personal growth, and many other pleasurable experiences; however, it can also bring many challenges. These challenges may be rooted in busy schedules, financial difficulties, social or geographical isolation, balancing work with family, and other stressors. Researchers are finding that these challenges can have an impact on parents and caregivers. They need to take care of their own emotional well-being, as well as their children's, and find sufficient social support for themselves and their family.

There is no one way to lessen the pressures and stress associate with caring for children. Self-care, however, is an effective way to promote personal well-being and create a nurturing, loving environment. When parents and caregivers are able to identify and meet their own needs, they model for their children what it means to value their bodies, minds and spirits. With the constraints of time and resources, many parents and caregivers routinely sacrifice their own needs.

## What is Self-Care?

Self-care is the maintenance of personal well-being. It is any activity of an individual, family or community that is done with the intention of maintaining, improving or restoring wellness. Adults and children share the same six categories of basic needs: physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual and creative. Self-care can help a person to meet these needs.

## Self-Care Strategy Ideas:

- ★ Nourish Yourself
  - Eat healthy meals and snacks, be aware of nutrition, take vitamins
  - Prepare a few days of healthy dinners in advance, so they are ready when you need them
  - Nourish your body with healthful warming soups
  - Drink a fresh glass of water
  - Avoid relying on caffeinated drinks and sugary foods for energy – they won't keep you going for long
  - Imagine an visualize – concentrate on a comforting scene
  - Take an afternoon nap, but don't snooze longer than 20 minutes, or you'll disrupt your night time sleep
  - Make a cup of tea in your favorite cup
  - Eat your favorite comfort food, but eat slowly and really enjoy it
  - Cut a variety of fruits in a nice bowl and enjoy
  - Find a new recipe to try
  
- ★ Bathroom Retreat:
  - Take a bubble bath
  - Massage hands with cream
  - Soak feet in special foot soap
  - Give yourself a foot massage
  - Brush your hair, massage your scalp
  - Pain you nails or toes
  - Sing in the shower
  - Make faces in the mirror and have a good laugh

- ★ Music and Movement:
  - Sing loudly to a favorite song
  - Pound out a beat on a drum
  - Listen to music or nature sounds
  - Dance, bust a move
  - Lip sync
  - Try some yoga poses or some favorite stretches
  - Exercise – jumping jacks, crunches, running on the spot
  - Try some deep breathing
  - Throw bunched up socks into a basket as a target
  - Swing, spin or slide at the playground
  - Push against a wall
  - Walk in nature and reflect on what you heard, saw, smelled and felt
  
- ★ Mind and Hand Games
  - Do crossword puzzles, mazes, Sudoku or puzzles
  - Crotchet, knit, weave or bead
  - Read a poem out loud or learn a new one to recite
  - Dream about a great vacation or renovation
  - Meditate or pray
  - Learn a phrase from a new language
  - Plant seeds, dig in the garden
  - Learn new skills
  - Engage in a new hobby
  - Take the time to write in a journal
  - Doodle, scribble or draw
  - Read a favorite book or magazine
  - Make a to-do list to get things off you mind
  - Create with play dough or clay
  
- ★ Just Plain Fun
  - Notice and appreciate humour
  - Watch a comedy
  - Do something you've never done before
  - Dance all by yourself to loud, fun music
  - Talk on the phone to friends or do not answer the phone at all
  - Light candles, buy fragrant candles
  - Find a special, quiet place and make it your own
  - Laugh from the belly
  
- ★ Reflection and Gratitude
  - Think of three things that went well today
  - Make a special effort to thank someone today
  - Spend time with people who are affirming, optimistic and nurturing
  - Save notes and letters that are complementary and read them often
  - Realize that wherever you are today is the place to start
  - Send a friend a card of thanks
  - Write down one strength that you are grateful for and post it on the fridge
  - Look at favorite photos

***What will you do today?***