

CARING FOR YOURSELF IN DIFFICULT OR CHALLENGING TIMES: HELPFUL TIPS

It is common for all of us to feel stressed from time to time. During uncertain times we may experience stress more often. Caregiving is a rewarding and demanding profession. It is important for you to practice self-care and identify effective ways to take time to care for yourself every day.



Tell yourself that "Self-Care Isn't Selfish!"

- o Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system.
- o Practice self-compassion. Pay attention to your inner voice and ask, "would I say this to my best friend"? If the answer is no, then give yourself some kindness, patience, and understanding.
- o Do something that you enjoy! Some examples include taking a bath, going for a walk, journaling, or something else that you find soothing.
- o Practice self-care **every day!** You can't pour from an empty cup.
- o Take care of your health! Eat nutritious food, get quality sleep, and stay physically active.



Seek Connection.

- o We may not always be able to connect face-to-face. Find creative ways to reach out for support from friends and family (i.e. phone, email, or even write a letter).
- o Take time to connect with nature. Go outside for a walk or sit outside for a few moments.
- o Write a note or send a text message to tell someone you haven't seen in awhile something nice.
- o Stay spiritually grounded. This may include mindfulness and/or prayer.



Set Reasonable Expectations.

- o Make time for yourself each day and break it up! Not everyone has 30 minutes at a time; set aside for yourself 10 - 15 minutes in the morning and 10 - 15 minutes in the afternoon or before bed.
- o Acknowledge what is in and out of your control.
- o Work on rebuilding/establishing a routine. It is helpful to focus on the parts of your day that you have control.
- o Reach out and accept help; it is also beneficial to help others who are in need.



Notice Your Feelings.

- o Reflect on your feelings, thoughts, and attitudes. Have you been short with others? Do you feel like yourself? All emotions are okay!
- o Make an effort to slow down and check in with how you're feeling.
- o Notice what events or things cause you more stress. When you feel overwhelmed identify a way to help you cope. State feelings in clear ways and practice stress reduction techniques: deep breathing, muscle relaxation, slowly drinking a glass of water.



Practice Gratitude.

- o Make a list of 5 things that make you feel grateful.
- o Keep a daily gratitude journal.
- o Share one thing from the day that was challenging and what you learned during family dinnertime.

References and Resources:

For links to additional resources or information visit www.neinfantmentalhealth.org



Nebraska Association
for Infant Mental Health