



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS INITIATIVE

Toolkit for Families of Young Children

Tip Sheet #4: Creating Stress-Relieving Strategies

Stress is a major problem for many families in today's society. Between work, school, dinner, and extracurricular activities, it can be challenging to cope with family stress in positive ways. Review the tips below to learn positive stress-relieving strategies that you can implement to reduce familial stress.

1. **Take care of your basic needs.** You have probably heard this many times before, but it's true, make sure you are getting adequate sleep, drinking water, and eating as healthy as possible. When you are able to take care of your basic needs, you will be better prepared to handle the needs of others.
2. **Set yourself up for success.** Avoid setting unrealistic expectations for yourself. Feeling overwhelmed or flustered by goals that have not been met can leave you feeling unmotivated to press on in other daily activities. Try to organize and manage your time wisely.
3. **Simplify your life.** Avoid over-committing yourself, especially when you feel like your plate is already full. Learn how to say, "No," to others, realizing that maybe at another point in time you will be able to say, "Yes."
4. **Identify triggers and barriers.** Ask yourself, "When, where, and who do I seem to get stressed out by?" Being able to identify the situations, places, and people who tend to bring stress your way will allow you to take preventative measures, like practicing breathing and/or relaxation techniques before you enter those situations.
5. **Communicate.** Sometimes others may not be aware of just how stressed out you are. Letting them know how you're feeling may help you to feel better and allow them to gain insight with you.
6. **Practice self-care.** Take time to reflect on ways that re-energize you when you're feeling worn out. Practice incorporating those things, even if for a short time, into your daily routine. Exercise, reading, mindfulness, and "unplugging" from technology are a few ways to regain your strength.
7. **Get Support.** It's okay to ask for help when you feel overwhelmed. It takes team work to make a family work. Many times asking for help will create an opportunity for you to go take care of your basic needs and/or self-care practices.
8. **Try something new.** We can sometimes feel stuck in our routines, even when we don't need to be sticking to them. Take time to review your weekly schedule and see where you can make changes that are more efficient to your current needs. Also try being spontaneous sometimes too.
9. **Your best is your best.** We all want to be the best at whatever we do, but in reality sometimes life doesn't make that possible. Being okay with your imperfections helps you to make the best of out any situation. Do your best, one thing at a time.
10. **Make memories.** Sometimes the best thing to do is just laugh. Find ways to take potential stressful situations and be silly by finding humor in them. Transform these negative situations into memorable moments that you and your family can laugh about in the future.