

PARENTS! YOU GOT THIS!

As a parent, things get stressful!! Follow along for ways to build your own and your family's ability to make it through life's ups and downs.



PARENTAL RESILIENCE

KNOW BETTER. DO BETTER.

All parents experience stress from time to time. Demonstrating resilience increases your ability to face challenges competently and to make wise choices about addressing challenges. But how do you build up your resilience?

I am glad you asked!!

Think about these things:

- Where does your strength come from?
- Describe how this helps you parent.
- What are your aspirations for yourself and your family?
- What do you find most stressful to you on a daily basis? How do you work through those life stressors?
- What kind of supports do you have? Where do you find most of your help when stressed?
- In what ways does your partner, spouse, or closest friend support you? Who and what helps you reduce stress?
- How can you challenge negative thoughts using the four critical thinking questions?

1. Where's evidence that this belief is true?
2. Where's the evidence that this belief is false?
3. What's the worst thing that could happen if things don't go the way I want them to go?
4. What good could come of this?

**** PLEASE NOTE THE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SECTION OF THIS GUIDE COMES TO YOU BY TALKING ISTEACHING.**

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE THE IMPACT OF STRESS

1. Exercise - There are a few reasons behind this:

- Stress hormones: Exercise lowers your body's stress hormones — such as cortisol — in the long run. It also helps release endorphins, which are chemicals that improve your mood and act as natural painkillers.
- Sleep: Exercise can also improve your sleep quality, which can be negatively affected by stress and anxiety.
- Confidence: When you exercise regularly, you may feel more competent and confident in your body, which in turn promotes mental wellbeing.

2. Reduce your caffeine intake - Caffeine is a stimulant found in coffee, tea, chocolate and energy drinks. High doses can increase anxiety. People have different thresholds for how much caffeine they can tolerate. If you notice that caffeine makes you jittery or anxious, consider cutting back. Although many studies show that caffeine can be healthy in moderation, it's not for everyone. In general, five or fewer cups per day is considered a moderate amount.

3. Write it down - While recording what you're stressed about is one approach, another is jotting down what you're grateful for. Gratitude may help relieve stress and anxiety by focusing your thoughts on what's positive in your life.

Keeping a journal can help relieve stress and anxiety, especially if you focus on the positive.

4. Spend time with friends and family - Social support from friends and family can help you get through stressful times. Being part of a friend network gives you a sense of belonging and self-worth, which can help you in tough times. Keep in mind that both men and women benefit from friendship.

5. Laugh - It's hard to feel anxious when you're laughing. It's good for your health, and there are a few ways it may help relieve stress:

- Relieving your stress response.
- Relieving tension by relaxing your muscles.
- Laughter can also help improve your immune system and mood.

6. Learn to say no - Not all stressors are within your control, but some are. Take control over the parts of your life that you can change and are causing you stress. One way to do this may be to say "no" more often. This is especially true if you find yourself taking on more than you can handle, as juggling many responsibilities can leave you feeling overwhelmed. Being selective about what you take on — and saying no to things that will unnecessarily add to your load — can reduce your stress levels.



THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE THE IMPACT OF STRESS, *continued!*

7. Learn to avoid procrastination

- Another way to take control of your stress is to stay on top of your priorities and stop procrastinating.
- Procrastination can lead you to act reactively, leaving you scrambling to catch up. This can cause stress, which negatively affects your health and sleep quality.
- Get in the habit of making a to-do list organized by priority. Give yourself realistic deadlines and work your way down the list.
- Work on the things that need to get done today and give yourself chunks of uninterrupted time, as switching between tasks or multitasking can be stressful itself.

8. Practice Mindfulness - Mindfulness describes practices that anchor you to the present moment. It can help combat the anxiety inducing effects of negative thinking. One way of doing this is through deep breathing. Mental stress activates your sympathetic nervous system, signaling your body to go into “fight-or-flight” mode. During this reaction, stress hormones are released and you experience physical symptoms such as a faster heartbeat, quicker breathing and constricted blood vessels. Deep breathing exercises can help activate your parasympathetic nervous system, which controls the relaxation response. There are several types of deep breathing exercises, including diaphragmatic breathing, abdominal breathing, belly breathing and paced respiration. The goal of deep breathing is to focus your awareness on

your breath, making it slower and deeper. When you breathe in deeply through your nose, your lungs fully expand and your belly rises. This helps slow your heart rate, allowing you to feel more peaceful.

9. Listening to music - Listening to music can have a very relaxing effect on the body. Slow-paced instrumental music can induce the relaxation response by helping lower blood pressure and heart rate as well as stress hormones. Some types of classical, Celtic, Native American and Indian music can be particularly soothing, but simply listening to the music you enjoy is effective too. Nature sounds can also be very calming. This is why they're often incorporated into relaxation and meditation music.

10. Cuddling – Whether it's your pet, child or a close friend or loved one, Positive physical contact can help release oxytocin and lower cortisol. This can help lower blood pressure and heart rate, both of which are physical symptoms of stress.

Although stress and anxiety may arise in your life, there are many simple ways to reduce the pressure you feel. These tips often involve getting your mind away from the source of the stress.

- **Remind yourself of these things often.**
- **It may take a combination of strategies that work best for you and your family, so experiment with different combinations.**
- **Try other things that you find enjoyable and distract you from stress!**