



Helpful tips for parents to de-stress

Stress is a part of being human and is a normal reaction to our environment and life's demands. While a little stress is normal and healthy and can motivate us to make changes, too much stress or stress over a long period of time is detrimental to our life and impacts significantly on our ability to parent effectively. The way we respond to stress as parents teaches children how to cope with life difficulties and it is extremely important that we role-model effective coping strategies and preventative strategies to our children. Here are some simple tips to help prevent stress build up and cope with stress.

- **De-Tech** - at the end of each day. Turn off everything, take time to slow down, connect with others and allow some time to just be "in the flow" of life. Without this time, stress builds and builds and will be released in unexpected or inappropriate ways.
- **Effective communication** - If you're feeling frustrated, write down what you need for you or your child and work out a plan of how to communicate your needs to others such as your partner, school, and other professionals. If you take time to plan ahead and work out what you need, then communication with others will most likely have a positive outcome.
- **Solutions** - Talk to a friend and brainstorm different solutions for difficult problems.
- **Overwhelmed?** Try to shift this feeling to "I have a lot to do". Write down what needs to be done and make a list starting with the most important. Finishing tasks replaces this feeling with a sense of accomplishment. Reach out to others if you need support.
- **Time Out** - Take time out each day to find a "calm" place within to re-connect to a positive outlook. Learn simple meditation techniques to do each day. Regularly reflect on all your achievements so far including yourself as a parent.
- **Replenish** - Laugh regularly! Find regular time to connect with friends or a support group. Sharing problems allows us to laugh and see the bigger picture. Find time to spend on a hobby or activity that allows creativity to flow.
- **Evaluate** - If you are feeling really anxious about your child's needs, take time to write down all the "worries" you have. Next to each worry, write if these worries will actually happen and evaluate how realistic they are. Most of what we worry about does not eventuate. Write down possible solutions to make changes or get professional support to boost your coping mechanisms.
- **Self soothe** - If things get really tough at home, take a break such as going for a walk, having a bath, focusing on a hobby, calling a friend or having a massage.
- **Support** – Seek support when feeling down, anxious or overwhelmed. You don't have to manage on your own and you will be more effective as a parent if you are feeling happier.
- **Spend time on personal interests** – It's so easy to forget about our own interests as parents as there is so much time and energy dedicated to children to meet their needs. Spending time on your personal interests, personal development and doing the things you love is vital to be a healthy and balanced parent. This also teaches children about taking care of yourself, nourishing your spirit and valuing your own strengths and interests.