

~ 6 Tips to Manage Parental Stress ~

Parenting and stress seem to go hand in hand. However, they don't have to! Here are a few tips to help manage stress so it doesn't negatively affect parent-child relationships:

1. **Don't ignore it!** The first step to managing stress is identifying what factors are contributing to stress and committing to addressing those things.
2. **Practice Mindfulness (focus on the “here and now”).** Mindfulness not only helps reduce stress, but builds resilience so that situations which are typically stressful are not as triggering in the future. *Practice mindfulness by:*
 - **Paying attention to something you do every day:** Concentrating fully on what we do helps us remain mentally present. Try concentrating on daily activities such as brushing your teeth or even chewing your food when you eat.
 - **Taking a few deep breathes whenever you can:** When you feel stressed try taking three deep breaths by breathing in through your nose for 10 seconds and exhaling out through your mouth for 10 seconds.
 - **Grounding yourself physically:** Try closing your eyes and thinking about how your hands feel when atop a table, or how your back feels touching the chair in which you're sitting.
3. **Eat right, sleep more, and exercise.** Even mild stressors can make people “go off the deep end” when they're sleep-deprived. Likewise, eating nutrient-enriched foods helps your body combat stress better and exercising releases endorphins, hormones related to happiness, which help relieve stress.
4. **Reframe stress.** If you can't change what's stressing you out, change the way you think about it. E.g. instead of stressing about a traffic jam when taking your child to school, think of it as an opportunity to spend more time with your child.
5. **Replace unhealthy coping strategies with new ones.** Think about how you currently cope with stress and whether those strategies are improving your overall physical and emotional health. If not, find ways other ways to cope such as journaling.
6. **Reach out to others.** Asking for help can be difficult, but having a supportive ear listening to you vent is sometimes one of the best ways to relieve stress.