

Mindscales- Volume X Edition 3

STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR PARENTS



Dear parent,

This edition of Mindscales will focus on the importance of self-care and mindfulness and tips on how to practice it at home.

Navigating the formative years of our children's education within the British Curriculum can be both exhilarating and challenging. As they progress through the Key Stages, the academic and social demands can sometimes feel overwhelming. As a school counsellor, I've observed the profound impact that self-care, mindfulness, and overall wellbeing can have on a student's success and happiness. Self-care goes beyond the occasional treat or indulgence. It's a consistent effort to cater to our physical, emotional, and mental needs.

Take time to learn to relax:

Parenting can be very stressfull- whether you are a stay-at-home parent or a working parent, a single parent or married parent, mother or father, parent of sinlge child or more that one children - staying calm and full of energy can be of great help.

Parenting stress is associated with both parenting behaviors and child adjustment.

Numerous studies have shown that parents who report higher levels of parenting stress are more likely to be authoritarian, harsh, and negative in their interactions with their child. Furthermore, parenting stress decreases the quality of the parent-child relationship

Parents of children who are diagnosed with a behavioral disorder or developmental disability are at increased risk of parenting stress.

1. Seek professional help

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, seek professional help from a psychologist or licensed mental health professional. Psychologist can be helpful to provide strategies to help you cope with life's challenges. Additionally, they may be able to provide you with resources to help improve our child's functioning and decrease problem behaviors that may increase parenting stress



2. Increase quality time with family

Find ways to do enjoyable activities with you and your family. By spending more quality time together, it improves the parent-child relationship. Furthermore, it is not helpful to overly focus on everything that is not going well in our child's life.

3. Prioritize ME TIME:

Many parents, especially those of children with special needs or mental health conditions have a hard time taking a break. This may be partly due to the time required to care for your child. However, many also feel they need permission to have some alone time. It is okay to take a break for yourself. It's actually healthy and more beneficial for you and your child to have some time apart.

4. Use your support systems

It is extremely important to make use of your support systems. Having social support is very helpful to decreasing parenting stress.

Relaxation techniques

Your breathing affects your whole body. When you feel stressed or worried, your body can become tense and your breathing speeds up. You can use breathing techniques to help you calm down. It can be very helpful to spend two to three minutes breathing deeply a couple of times a day to help you feel calm.

These exercises can be done anywhere, anytime.



Deep breathing

Try to breathe in slowly and deeply to fill your lungs with air. Then breathe out slowly and fully. You can count to five on each inhale and exhale to help you breathe slowly. Try practicing this for two to three minutes. If you are doing this with your children, explain that when they inhale, they are blowing up their tummy softly like a balloon, and when they exhale the air is going slowly out of the balloon again.

Listen to your breath

It can be helpful to listen to your breath as the air goes in and out. You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath. Listen to your breath for a while.

Add gentle movement

Drop your hands below your waist and keep your palms facing up. Slowly raise your hands as you breathe in through your nose. Stop when your hands are about shoulder level. Slowly lower your hands as you breathe out through your mouth.

Positivity, problem-solving and play

When you are facing challenging times, it can be difficult to feel hopeful that things can improve. But it is important to remind yourself that you do have control over different aspects of your life and that you can bring about change. When we feel hopeful, it helps us to focus on change, look to the future, and actively look for solutions to the difficulties we may face.

If you are facing a problem, try to write down as many ways of overcoming it as you can. Then think about the pros and cons of each solution and which ones would be easier to put into practice. Sometimes you will need to try more than one solution. If a problem seems too big to take on, try breaking it down into smaller tasks to make it more manageable.





It is important to remember that you are not alone and that others can play an important role in helping us. Don't wait to ask others for help if you are feeling overwhelmed. Speak to a friend or family member who can support. Try to find ways to include your children in age-appropriate tasks around the home – it can be a great way to connect, help children develop skills and take some of the pressure off you.

Playing with your children is a proven way to relieve stress. Whether it's playing a game, dancing or singing together, when you're enjoying fun moments and laughing together, your body releases endorphins that promote a feeling of well-being. Even short periods of play can help remind adults of their ability to support their child, as well as provide a happy distraction from whatever else is on your mind.

Affirmation Cards!

Create cards with positive affirmations. Pick one each morning to set a positive tone for the day.

REFERENCES:

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/mental-health/how-reduce-stress-parents>

https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/how-to-be-a-parent/angry_child/stress/

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-race-good-health/201306/4-tips-managing-parenting-stress>

