

Taking care of yourself

Are you starting to notice that you:

- Feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy?
- Have negative thoughts about your life?
- Are easily irritated by small problems?
- Feel you are not getting what you want out of your life?
- Feel others expect more than you feel capable of doing?



If you answered YES to any of these, you may be at risk for burn out. Try the following tips!

Make time for yourself

You were a person before a parent. When was the last time you did something nice for yourself, such as going out with your partner, having coffee with a friend, reading, taking a class or doing something you enjoy?

Take some time to really look at your life. Be honest with yourself.

- Notice the areas of your life that are out of balance
- Set some small goals to meet your personal needs
- Plan time in your daily routine to work on your goal(s)

Meet your physical needs

Sometime life just feels like it gets too big for even the most basic self-care.

Balancing family and work life can take its toll. This may mean you need to really work at scheduling time to care for yourself.

Taking time to pay attention to your basic needs will give you more energy to focus on taking care of your children or dealing with life in general. It takes practice!

- Get 6 to 8 hours of sleep
- Have medical and dental checkups
- Eat healthy meals and snacks
- Get some physical activity each day
- Take time to 'recharge'

Be a good role model

Caring for yourself is an important life skill. It helps you:

- ✓ Feel calm, confident and in charge
- ✓ See things more clearly and make better decisions
- ✓ Work better with others, including your children and partners
- ✓ Feel better able to meet your goals and enjoy life more fully

Most importantly, you are showing your children how to do this for themselves.

Do fun self-care activities with your children, such as:

- Walks after dinner
- Gazing at stars or clouds
- Creating a 'calm down spot' with your children. Fill it with things they find calming, such as soothing music, soft toys, books, blankets. This can be their special place to calm down, whenever they need it.
- Colouring
- Preparing a healthy snack
- Bubble baths
- Yoga
- Mindfulness or medication
- Foot massage

Don't be too critical of yourself

Have you given yourself a compliment today? Do you get trapped in negative thinking?

Life can be fast and challenging. Slow it down and take it step by step.

1. Recognize that you are doing the best you can.
2. Set small goals that are realistic.
3. Give yourself a reasonable time to reach your goals.
4. Consider what worked well and congratulate yourself!

It doesn't matter if you are making personal changes for you or trying out a new parenting idea. Any change takes time!

Try it out as you are reading this: What nice thing could you say about yourself right now?

For more information or help

See our 'Growing together Flyer' at www.mchcommunityed.ca for free community programs, such as **Burnt Out** a 4-session self care course for caregivers.

To register for groups or programs call 905-521-2100, ext. 74147

Community Education Service
Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre
McMaster Children's Hospital