

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND: A MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

YMCA OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY



Being a parent or caregiver can be a very rewarding and joyful experience. It can also be stressful and challenging at times. As parents and caregivers, we have a lot on our plates. Between balancing family, work, social life, and household tasks, we tend to leave little time for self-care, which sometimes results in poor stress management.

When it comes to determining healthy outcomes for children, how we respond to stress is much more important than the stressor itself. As role models for our kids, every challenge we face is an opportunity for us to model emotional regulation and resilience.

Resilience is the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with stress, adversity, and trauma.

We all have the inner strengths and skills needed to help us build resilience and provide a safe, loving environment for our kids. When difficult situations arise, how do you typically react? Are you flexible? Do you use humor to lighten the mood? Do you communicate openly about your feelings? Are you a good problem-solver? Do you show compassion? Chances are, you regularly do at least one of these things. All of these are ways to demonstrate resilience, which is proven to have positive effects on children and their healthy development.

When something stressful happens, parenting can become much harder. That's why it's helpful to have go-to strategies in place that will reduce your stress and help you navigate difficult situations. Remember, self-care is not selfish. Practicing daily self-care and compassion will help you replenish your energy, focus, and positivity to help you be the best parent you can be.



BOX BREATHING is a simple but powerful relaxation technique that can calm your mind and improve your focus. Close your eyes. Breathe in for 4 seconds. Hold for 4 seconds. Exhale for 4 seconds. Repeat 4 times.



EXERCISING regularly can improve your mood, reduce stress and anxiety, enhance brain function, and boost self-esteem. Joining a group exercise class, swimming in a pool, or taking walks through the neighborhood are all great ways to clear your mind.



SPENDING TIME ALONE reading, listening to music, or relaxing can help you decompress and recharge. Give yourself permission. We all need a little "me" time.



CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY is a part of staying healthy. Grabbing coffee with a friend or attending one of our parent support groups can be a powerful buffer to stress and source of well-being.



ASKING FOR AND ACCEPTING HELP is a sign of courage and strength. Lean on your support system and seek out resources to lessen the burden and feel supported by community.

FREE SUPPORT GROUPS for parents and caregivers to connect with other parents and learn parenting techniques from our youth development experts.

Scan the QR code or visit ymcasd.org/mha to find mental health resources and learn about our mental health awareness campaign activities throughout the month of May!

