



Self-Care Isn't Selfish

For many families, the current climate amid COVID-19 and social distancing has added a new layer of stress to the preexisting stressors of daily family life. Families may face a higher risk of conflict or argument due to more time spent at home. Additionally, the effects of the pandemic may put financial strain on a household. Even in unique times such as these, parents need to remember that they are strong and flexible. Read on for tips to help parents cope with stress and summer fun activities to bring the family closer together.



Self-Care

To feel more at ease, here are strategies to help increase mindfulness and reduce stress.

- **One Minute Time Out** – Unplug from stress and anxiety. Set a time for one minute and commit to pressing pause on fixating on the stressors in your life. Pop your head down to rest or go for a walk until the timer goes off.
- **Mindful Coffee Challenge** – If you enjoy a cup of coffee in the morning, try this mindful moment. Take the time to sense the stimuli around. Notice the sounds, the aroma of your coffee, your feet as you walk, the warmth of your coffee cup, the taste and feeling of the coffee in your mouth.
- **The Rescue Breath** – If you feel especially stressed, use this strategy to calm yourself. Take in the biggest deep breath you can. Next, exhale quickly and as hard as you can through your mouth. This action relaxes your diaphragm and helps your body regulate agitated breathing. Do this once or twice and then return your normal breathing pattern.

Physical Activity

Even though we must be cautious about transmission of the Coronavirus, parents should still prioritize physical activity for themselves and their children.

- **Mindful family walk** – Tune into your senses and notice the sights, sounds, and smells of your neighborhood. Research area trails and nature walks to get closer to the great outdoors.
- **Yoga** – Stretching has both physical and mental benefits. While yoga increases flexibility and muscle strength, it encourages a calm mind, too.
- **Family games** – Involve the whole family in games that get the body moving. Try a game of Charades, Simon Says, or Hot Potato to entertain the whole family.

StressHappens.org Focus Areas for May

M – Mindfulness – Observe your thoughts and emotions without judgment. Be present in the moment.

A – Anxiety is a normal human emotion. Remind yourself that it will pass and that you are safe. Reach out to a friend or a counselor if you need help.

Y – Yoga – Tune into your body and notice where you may feel tension. Stress takes a physical toll on the body. Honor the connection between the mind and body.