



PLAN:

The importance of self-care

Self-care is a good example of a priority that is hard to set for many people. You may need to work together with the parent to understand and embrace the reality that parents have to take care of themselves to be able to provide care for their children. It may be instinct for a parent to respond to a child's needs first. Coupled with the guilt and shame some parents may feel about their behavioral health conditions and the impact of their illnesses on their children, parents may feel twice as guilty if they think they are ignoring their children to take care of their own needs. Unfortunately, parents may prioritize their children's needs in the short-term, and put themselves at risk over time, if they become "run down" or have decreased capacity to cope with day-to-day challenges. An effective, positive self-care strategy helps us "recharge our batteries" when our energy is running low.

Self-care strategies contribute to coping skills and resiliency. A self-care strategy may help you to feel better when you are hurt or feeling bad. Self-care is also something you can do in an ongoing way, so you can deal better with stress and crises as they come up. People who take good care of themselves are likely to be more resilient, to cope better and to have better outcomes when facing challenges. Self-care strategies are individualized. What is effective for one person will not necessarily work for another. What is important is to identify what works best for you or, in the ParentingWell practice approach, the parent you're working with.