

# Self Care

Because taking care of yourself is taking care of your children

#### Introductions

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#### Introductions continued

- Also a parent
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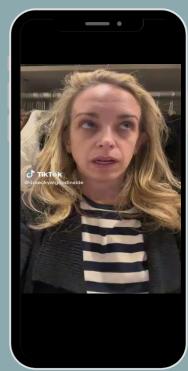




How full is your parental stress bucket?

#### Stress makers

- Parenting demands
- Advice overwhelm
- Feeling judged
- Financial concerns
- Systemic problems
- Invisible responsibilities
- Impossible expectations
- Trauma history
- Lack of support



#### Self Care

- Self care is anything we do to take care of our own basic physical, emotional, and spiritual and fulfillment needs.
- In order to meet our needs at the top, we must make sure our basic needs are being met at the bottom.

Spiritual Fulfillment (values, goals)

# Emotional (healthy relationships, love, support)

Physical (sleep, nutrition, safety, housing, health)

# Self care is a discipline





#### Self care does have limitations

Self care can help in many ways, but self care is not helpful when:

- Used to promote unrealistic productivity expectations
- Expected to be the solution to systemic problems
- Focused on beauty or looks, leading to body image concerns
- Expected to substitute for clinical help related to physical or mental health challenges
- . It becomes work

#### When self-care becomes work

- Numerous studies indicate that Americans associate busyness and stress with prestige and status
- Resist the urge to make self care the next chore, obsession, or avenue for selfcriticism
  - "Self care" that causes more stress than it alleviates, and results in feeling bad or guilty is
     not self care
  - $_{\circ}$  If "to do list mentality" is a major source of stress in the first place, don't add to i
  - While beating ourselves up often *seems* like the most effective way to motivation, self-criticism has been shown to preoccupy us with failure and contributes to symptoms of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and negative self-image



#### When self care causes guilt

Reason #1: Your self care definition

 Self-care is about your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being and there's nothing indulgent or selfish about that

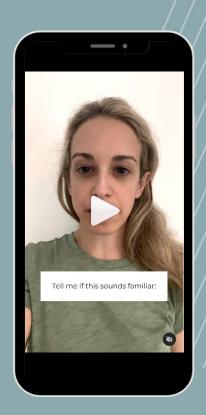
Reason #2: The belief that prioritizing something means taking away from something else

 Self-care must come BEFORE this equation ever comes into play; it should be prioritized, even before many things on your to-do list

Reason #3: Success is defined as achievement

• Success shouldn't be based on outcome or achievement, but instead on input (i.e., how you behave, how hard you work, how you treat yourself and how you treat others)







# The relationship between self care and burnout

- Too often we decide to prioritize self care after we're already burnt out
- Developing a self-care practice before this happens and paying attention to the warning signs is one of the best ways to prevent it

"People don't realize they're not taking care of themselves. Burnout doesn't happen suddenly. It happens slowly, over time. We often begin looking to self care when it's too late and we're already burned out."

--Tou Ger

Lee

#### Burnout - let's get started

- Consists of three components
  - Emotional exhaustion
    - The fatigue that comes from caring too much for too long
  - Decreased sense of accomplishment
    - The unconquerable sense of futility, feeling that nothing you do makes any difference
  - Depersonalization
    - The depletion of empathy, caring and compassion



"If you feel 'burnout' setting in, if you feel demoralized and exhausted, it is best, for the sake of everyone, to withdraw and restore yourself."

-- Dalai Lama





#### The Stress Cycle

- Stressors are the things that activate the stress response
  - Most of them are external, some are internal (e.g. self-criticism; trauma history)
- Stress itself happens within your body; The chemical response that is activated when faced with those stressors
  - Designed to help us evolutionarily survive the stress like being chased by a lion or charged by a hippo
- The emotions it invokes are an involuntary neurological response; they have a beginning, a middle and an end
- Think of the stress cycle like a tunnel, you have to go all the way through to get to the light at the end

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#### The Stress Cycle

- "In short, emotions are tunnels. If you go all the way through them, you get to the light at the end. Exhaustion happens when we get stuck in an emotion." --Emily Nagoski
- Stuckness might be simply because there
  is constant exposure to situations that
  activate emotion
- OR stuckness happens because we can't find our way through the tunnel





"The stress itself will kill you faster than the stressor will - unless you do something to complete the stress response cycle. While you're managing the day's stress, it's absolutely essential to your well-being that you give your body the resources it needs to complete the stress response cycles that have been activated."

-- Emily and Amelia Nagoski



# How do we complete the cycle?



Physical Activity



Intentional Breathing



Positive Social Interaction



Somatic Touch



Self Compassion





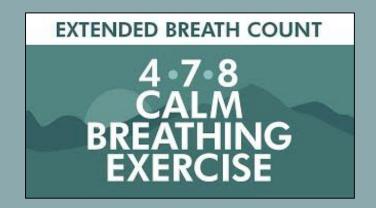
## Complete the Stress Response Cycle

- The bad news: Removing the stressors does not mean the stress cycle is complete
- The good news: You don't have to wait for all the stressors to go away before you can start to feel better
  - However, when the stressors do go away, we have to deal with the stress separately
- How do we make this happen? How to complete the stress cycle.
  - Most efficient Physical activity; literally any movement of your body
  - To get the most out of this strategy, don't wait for motivation -- schedule enjoyable activity and follow through



#### Complete the Stress Response Cycle

- Next up: Breathing
  - Breathing down Slow breath in and especially a slow, long breath out
  - It is the gentlest way to complete the stress response cycle



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## Complete the Stress Response Cycle

- After that: Positive social interaction
- The natural inclination to connect with other people tells the body that it is somewhere safe
  - Can be quick, simple connections; like giving kids a hug and telling them we love them
- Another option: Laughter. Not polite laughter. Not nervous laughter. Can't breathe, can't stop, hunched over, crying laughter.
  - That laughter will take you all the way through the end of a stress cycle
- Finally, a big old cry.
  - "Anyone who says crying doesn't solve anything doesn't know the difference between dealing with the stress and dealing with the situation that causes the stress."
    - Emily Nagoski



# The power of being heard





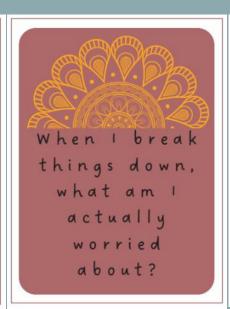
# Somatic touch

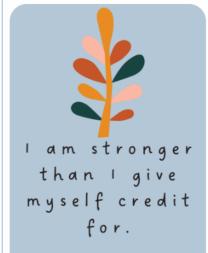


### Self compassion



What advice would I give to a friend, child or partner?









### Additional ways to empty the bucket

#### Stress relievers:

- Sleep & rest
- Wholesome food
- Hydration
- Nature
- Art/crafts/creativity
- Reduce stimulation
- Journal feelings
- Stop multitasking

- Restructure to-do lists
- Adjust expectations
- Align with values
- Hold boundaries
- Seek support
- Practice gratitude
- Reduce social media use
- Decrease clutter



#### Self Care Journal Activity

Take a moment to reflect on what we've discussed and consider the following:

- 1. Do you currently implement self care activities (perhaps you call them something else)? If yes, what are those activities?
- 2. Are there self care activities you did before you were a parent that you wish you still practiced? Is there something completely new you'd like to try?
- 3. What makes self care difficult for you? Is there anything that makes it easier?



# It takes a village

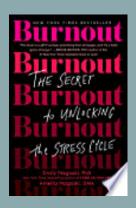
#### Podcasts



#### Social Media

- @parentingtranslator
- @healthiest\_baby
- @dr.martha.psychologist
- @drbeckyatgoodinside
- @lizandmollie
- @dr.siggie
- @biglittlefeelings
- @the.dad.vibes
- @candicedenise

#### Reading



#### Reminders



