Some Stress Relievers

When you feel overwhelmed with stress and need to calm down, here are some tips...

- Breathe deeply or count to ten. Put your child in a safe area and go outside or to another room for a few minutes.
- Lie on the floor with your feet up on a chair. Place a cool cloth on your face and think of a peaceful scene. Stay there for five minutes.
- Stop. Try to think what is making you so angry. Is it the children or is it something else? Are you taking your frustrations out on them?
- Designate a place, even a chair or a corner, as a “time-out” spot where you can go when you feel you are losing your temper. Designate a safe, separate place for your child. When you are cool and collected, tell your child what made you angry.

People Who Will Help

For parent discussion groups and communication skills workshops in your area, contact:

- Your County Extension Family Living Agent
  https://counties.uwex.edu
- Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin
  920-969-7925 or 1-800-CHILDREN

Helplines:
Milwaukee – 414-671-0566
Madison – 608-241-2221

Others who will help:
Look online or in the yellow pages of your telephone directory under social or human service organizations. Examples might include:

- Mental Health Association
- Catholic Social Services
- Lutheran Social Services

Contact your county...
Social or Human Service Department
On Being a Parent

Being a parent is one of the hardest jobs in the world. It places constant demands on your time and patience. The pressures can be overwhelming. These pressures can make you feel frustrated, irritated, resentful and helpless—all normal feelings.

The word for these feelings is STRESS. If you consistently have any of these feelings, you could be under stress:

Lonely and cut off
- “I’m always tied down to the house and kids!”
- “I don’t have anyone to talk to.”
- “Nobody could understand…”
- “If I were only closer to my family…”

Resentful and angry
- “No one appreciates me.”
- “Why does the burden fall on me?”
- “I can never do what I want to do.”
- “Being a parent is not what I thought it would be.”

Up the wall with your kids
- “I lose my temper more often lately.”
- “I can’t stand the crying another minute.”
- “I’m afraid of what I might do to him.”
- “I’m in constant conflict with my teenager.”

Down on yourself
- “I can’t do anything right.”
- “I feel so unimportant.”
- “I try hard, but never get anywhere.”

Unsure
- “I don’t know what to do with this child.”
- “I can’t decide what to do next.”
- “I want to be a ‘good’ parent, but I don’t know how.”
- “I never know if I’m doing the right thing.”

Stress Takes Its Toll

When you are under stress, you may lash out at those closest to you—even your children. Lashing out can cause more stress—for you and your child. It’s painful for your child. It’s painful and scary for you. It can be a vicious circle.

Or you may just withdraw or escape by whatever means—watching TV, overeating or drinking or spending time away from your family—so you won’t have to deal with the problems. This doesn’t help either.

No One Can Do It Alone

When these stresses build and you find yourself losing control or giving up, there are people who can help. You just have to reach out to them.

Talk It Out

Share your feelings with someone you trust—a friend, a relative, your spouse, your clergyman, your doctor, a close neighbor.

Find a parent support group or parent education course in your area. (See back page for agencies that can help you and your family.)