



PRACTICING SELF-KINDNESS

During heightened times of stress, self-care becomes all the more critical, especially for parents. With self-care being such a broad topic, it can be challenging to know where to begin. Adapted from Arizona State University's Resilient Parenting for Bereaved Families, this tip sheet and accompanying webinar focus on how to be kind to yourself through self-compassion and positive self-talk.

1. GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION

Parents often struggle with being kind to themselves and taking care of themselves during times that are stressful for the whole family. Giving yourself permission to take care of yourself is not self-indulgent. Making self-care a priority will put you in a better situation to be able to care for your family.

2. NOTICE YOUR OWN INTERNAL DIALOGUE

Bring awareness to the thoughts you are having. Many people have thoughts that make them feel badly. Like many others, you may find that you are your own worst critic. These negative thought cycles, when not noticed and shifted, can weigh you down and impact your emotions.

3. KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Having negative self-talk is normal! Times of stress often lead to this type of habitual thinking. Don't criticize yourself for having unkind thoughts. Just be aware of them. Let your awareness be a signal to your commitment to being kinder to yourself. This is why self-care is critical during times of heightened stress.

4. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD SAY TO A FRIEND

It is often easier to be kinder to those you care about than yourself. If you are having a hard time finding a kinder thought, think about what you would say to a close friend who you wanted to help in the same situation. Then, say that to yourself.

5. REFRAME YOUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS WITH A FEW SIMPLE STEPS

- Acknowledge the negative thought.
- Name the thought. All you are doing is getting in tune with what you are thinking and feeling.
- Remember it is only a thought. We all have them. Instead of letting it bring you down, use it to remind yourself of your commitment to be kinder to yourself.



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- What might you say to a friend who is thinking the same thought?
- Try using the kinder and gentler thought you would say to a friend on yourself.
- Repeat this thought to yourself 3 times. How does it feel? Commit to practice using the thoughts that are letting you be kinder and gentler to yourself.
- Allow yourself to feel the compassion and kindness. It is ok to care for yourself.

This might feel strange or silly at first but the more you practice, the more normal it will become.

6. INCLUDE SELF-KINDNESS IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Life is incredibly busy and chaotic, which can make this practice feel impossible. Building awareness and practicing this often will be helpful as you form a new habit. Help yourself to remember by putting post-it notes with kind words or thoughts on your mirror or setting a daily reminder on your phone. Self-care starts with self-love. Make a goal as you start each day to do one self-kindness thing for yourself today.

7. SHARE YOUR PRACTICE WITH YOUR FAMILY

When you give yourself the time to practice self-care, you are not only taking better care of your family but modeling and teaching your children the importance of this practice as well.