



The Balance Beam: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Your Kids

Valuing the importance of taking care of yourself is an essential component of successful parenting. Life, work, and family commitments take a toll on all of us. We all have responsibilities that pull us in countless directions, making us feel stressed out, short-tempered, and, at times, overwhelmed.

Self-care becomes especially vital when you're an adoptive parent due to the early life experiences that your children may have faced. Finding the rhythm between all of the roles you play will result in a healthier family and a healthier you.

Self Care Essentials

The essential ingredients of self care include admitting it when you're overwhelmed, valuing the process of taking care of yourself and giving yourself time.

First, admit that you are overwhelmed. Some signs include:

- Feeling that every day seems too hard
- Lacking enjoyment in daily activities
- Feeling like a small request or new responsibility is more than you can handle.

It's okay to say you're overwhelmed—it doesn't make you less of a parent. It's a sign of

strength in knowing that your needs are important too. What's more, you're teaching your kids that it's good for them to take care of themselves when they're feeling stressed.

Self care also takes time—away from other activities and other people. Though family

time is also important, we as parents need to be refreshed to give back to the well being of our families. You can only fulfill the needs of your family when your own emotional and spiritual cup is filled. So find a variety of activities that allow you in small and big ways to “refill your cup.”

Keeping Your Emotional Cup Filled to the Brim

Wisconsin foster and adoptive mother, Peg Cadd and her husband Rick have been providing care for kids for 30 years. Along the way, they have gained a great deal of insights regarding the

importance of self-care.

“When parenting a traumatized child with attachment issues, it's easy to be sucked in by them,” says Peg. “At times, it can feel like you are continuing to pour love and caring into a cup that cannot be filled.”

Keeping your cup filled can be challenging but there is hope.

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Surrounding yourself with a support network of family and friends is helpful and then being willing to reach out to them when you're feeling out of balance is important.

Keys to Self Care

We all have our own preferred ways of caring for ourselves and making this a priority. The following are some tips that have worked for others and might help you find what will work best for you.

- Honor yourself by acknowledging that fostering and adopting is challenging. If it were easier, more families would be doing it.
- Keep your sense of humor. Laugh early and often!
- Ask for help when you need it, including talking to a counselor who specializes in foster and adoption issues. Seeking out support is a sign of strength.
- Take breaks. Respite care is a valuable resource. Build a support system of caregivers who can step in when you feel that you're at your breaking point.
- Join a support group—either in person or online—or network with other foster and/or adoptive families. Contact us at the Coalition to help you connect with others.
- Attend training and workshops. Knowledge is power and provides you with additional parenting resources.
- Keep it simple. Choose an activity that fits with your lifestyle and your family.
- Stop comparing yourself to other people. There is only one you in all of the world and you have no comparison.
- Develop healthy habits such as eating well and exercising regularly.
- Sleep well, which may even require planning a respite overnight for your children or yourself. Or perhaps just

making sure to fit some daily naps in each day.

- Let go of the guilt. Parenting is the most rewarding and the most difficult thing you will ever do. There is no reason to feel guilty for needing a break or taking time for yourself.

Parenting isn't an easy journey. We—and our families—all have our own journey, with our own wants and needs. We want to encourage you to take time for you so when life throws you loops, you are fully charged and ready to face them.

Contact us at info@coalitionforcyf.org or at 800-762-8063. We're here to offer ideas and sometimes just to listen.



Resources

- [What Do You Do to Keep Your Emotional Well from Running Dry?](#)
- [Partners Newsletter: Taking Care of Yourself](#)
- [Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Inc.](#)
- [Connecting Bridges Facebook Group](#)
- [Reaching Your Boiling Point](#)



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