

SELF-CARE: THE NEED FOR BALANCE

Being a family leader can be hard work, but the rewards are immeasurable and are best enjoyed when we care for ourselves. Resilient family leaders recognize the need for balance in their lives, and that means incorporating activities from more than one area of self-care: emotional, physical, spiritual and mental.

REMEMBER:

1. **“Put on your own oxygen mask before trying to help those around you.”**
2. **When the work gets to be too much, delegate.** Give yourself permission to ask for help at home and at work. Just like we tell our families we work with, it's okay to ask for help. The same is true for us! You are not a superhero, but you *are* super, though.
3. **Don't be so hard on yourself.** Do the best you can with the tools you have right now.
4. **Take time for yourself every day.** Eat lunch. Have a cup of tea. Take a break during the day to laugh and chat with a friend. Sit and relax. Listen to your favorite music. Rest your eyes. Find ways you can easily take time for yourself.
5. **Don't wait until you realize you need self-care.** Build time into each day—even multiple times during the day—to ensure balance.
6. Being a family leader exposes you to many of life's stresses, whether they are personal or otherwise. **It is important to be mindful which stressors are within your control.** For ones that are not, we need to breathe and let go.
7. Family leaders carry a passion to help others. **Sometimes that drive finds us wanting to answer calls to help of others at all hours of the night and even through the weekends, but this can lead to burnout.**
8. **Listen to your body and mind and take care of them.** Self-awareness is key to recognizing when we need replenishing. Ask yourself: How am I feeling? What are my fears? What can I learn from this?
9. **Analyze your feelings and body signs.** Often, we become so enthralled with the importance of our work that we stifle the little signs of compassion fatigue such as holding our breath, tension around the shoulders and neck, and lack of sleep. Take stock.
10. **Create a self-care bank.** Since it's in our nature to help, we feel good about ourselves and better about the world when we are helping. So, when fatigue creeps up on us, it's good to have a plan to combat it. An easy way to do this is to ask friends and colleagues what they do when fatigue hits. Put their suggestions in a journal titled *"My Self-Care Bank."* Stockpile and prepare, and when those moments of fatigue hit, take from your bank and try one of the suggestions. Enjoy!

Are you a family member of a child or youth that has a mental or behavioral health condition? Are you interested in standing with other families to provide a united voice for systems change? If so, please contact us to learn more about Texas Family Voice Network.

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