



Ask for help if you need it

Friends and family can often help - don't be afraid to ask them to have your child for a bit if you need some time out to sort out your own stuff. You can repay them when things get better for you!



Don't struggle alone

If things are getting you down, it's important to recognise this. Talk to someone you trust and see what they think. Many people go on struggling with very difficult situations because they feel they should be able to cope and don't deserve any help.



Take time for yourself

It's easy to say take some time for yourself but in reality this may not feel possible. You might be too busy, exhausted or hard up for exercise or hobbies. But even a night in with a friend, a DVD box set or your favourite dinner can help.



Don't blame yourself

If your child is having problems, don't be too hard on yourself or blame yourself. Although it can be upsetting and worrying if your child is having a bad time, and it makes your relationship with them feel more stressful, you are not a bad parent. Children often take it out on those closest to them, so you might be feeling the effect of their very powerful emotions.



You're doing everything you can

If you had a difficult time growing up yourself, or have had emotional problems or mental health problems, it can be very worrying to think that the same thing might happen to your child. But the love and care you show them and the fact that you are trying to help will protect against this. Getting help for them and perhaps for yourself too can give them the best chance of feeling better.



Speak to your GP if you're struggling to cope

Go to your GP if things are really getting on top of you. Asking for some support from your doctor or a referral to a counselling service is a sign of strength. You can't help your child if you are not being supported yourself. Some people worry their parenting will be judged and their children will be taken away if they admit they are struggling to cope. This should only happen if a child is being abused or neglected and the role of professionals is to support you to look after your child as well as you can.