



Avoiding Burnout as a Parent of a Child with Mental Illness

Being a parent is hard work, especially for parents of children with mental illness. If you are one of those parents, it may be difficult to avoid experiencing parent burnout: feeling so tired and overwhelmed that you feel like you can't give any more.

However, with some work, you can avoid burnout by taking care of yourself, building your own support network, and understanding those who help your children.

There are many other ways to love and show love to your children with mental illness that can help you avoid parent burnout.

Tips for Avoiding Parent Burnout

- **Make a list of your children's strengths** and share it with family, friends, and especially your children. The list can serve as a reminder of how amazing and valuable your children are.
- **Reminisce fun memories with your children.** Tell funny family stories, watch family home movies, or look at family pictures. This can help your whole family feel more connected and happier.
- **Keep a daily journal** and write what you're grateful for about your children or about one positive thing that happened that day with your children. This can help you keep a positive perspective even on difficult days.
- **Show your love and support through appropriate touch.** Giving them hugs, touching their shoulders when you talk with them or giving them a quick back scratch can help your children feel accepted and loved.
- **Show little acts of kindness.** For example, surprise your children with their favorite treat, ask if you can do whatever their favorite activity is with them, or smile when they walk into the room.

*Information in this article came from <https://childmind.org/article/preventing-parent-burnout/>.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING HARMFUL OUTLETS FOR STRESS

What do you do when you're stressed? There are healthy outlets (such as exercising), which give you resources to deal with stress. There are also harmful outlets (such as drinking alcohol), which try to remove or mask feelings of stress. Since avoiding stress altogether is unlikely, here are some tips for avoiding harmful outlets for stress.

- **Keep a journal** about your stress outlets. Do you notice any outlets that could be replaced with healthier outlets?
- **Make a stress outlet plan.** Decide what you will do when you're feeling stressed. Write out your plan, including as many details as you can.
- **Learn how to better manage your stress.** The better you are able to manage your stress, the less likely you are to turn to and rely on harmful outlets for help in difficult times.