Stress Health Goals

When you experience stress:

Your body may make more stress hormones than is healthy.

Safe and nurturing relationships, healthy nutrition, daily exercise, healthy sleep, practicing mindfulness, and getting mental health support can help reduce stress hormones and prevent physical and mental health problems.

Here are some goals you can set for yourself and/or your family:

Healthy Relationships Goals:

- Using respectful communication even when we are upset or angry.
- Spending more quality time together as a family such as
  - Having regular family meals together
  - Having regular "no electronics" time for us to talk/play together
- Making time to see friends to create a healthy support system for myself and my family.
- Connecting regularly with our community in settings like gyms, library, place of worship, or local support group.

Exercise Goals:

- Reducing sedentary time by limiting screen time for fun (not school or homework related) to less than 2 hours a day (and none for children under 2 years old).
- Walking at least 20 minutes every day.
- Finding a type of exercise that I/we enjoy doing.
- Getting myself or my child involved in sport, dance, or other form of routine exercise.

Nutrition Goals:

- Drinking water instead of juice or soda.
- Eating 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Choosing whole grains like brown rice instead of white rice and whole wheat bread/pasta.
- Paying attention to gut health, for example by adding fish oil and fiber to your diet.

Sleep Goals:

- Turning off screens 30 minutes before bedtime and/or using blue light blocking glasses.
- Going to bed at the same time every night.
- Making a routine of reading a book (to my child) before bed (or letting my older child read to me).
- Creating a calm place for sleep by dimming the lights and keeping the noise level down.
- Using mindfulness or other stress reduction tools if worry is keeping me/my child up at night.

Mindfulness Goals:

- Taking moments throughout the day to notice how I am feeling, both physically and emotionally.
- Downloading a mindfulness app such as Calm, Stop, Breathe, and Think, or Headspace.
- Practicing mindfulness breathing during stressful situations.
- Creating a routine of prayer, meditation, and/or a moment of gratitude daily.
- Attending a yoga or martial arts class regularly.

Mental Health Goals:

- Having a conversation as a family about our beliefs about mental health.
- Learning more about mental health treatment options (i.e. counseling, medication).
- Identifying a local mental health professional.
- Scheduling an appointment with a mental health professional.

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Remember:

When you fly in an airplane the safety instructions tell you to put on your own oxygen mask first.

You cannot pour from an empty cup.

Self care does not mean "Me First."
It means "Me too."

The most important ingredient for healthy children is a healthy caregiver. Here are some goals you can set for yourself to help your whole family be healthier:

Self Care Goals:

Making a plan for what to do when I'm feeling stressed out, angry, or overwhelmed.
Planning with my partner, friends, or family to have time for myself.
Calling for help if I am not safe at home.
Making a regular appointment with my medical provider for preventative care.
Seeing a mental health care provider for stress management.
Separating work from "me" time or time with family and friends.
Going out in nature.
Getting creative (drawing, painting, making music).
Learning a new skill.
Treating yourself to something nice (and healthy).

Engaging in *self compassion*:

o   Assessing your self-compassion here:
o   https://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/
o   Doing self-compassion meditations: https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/
o   Trying these self-compassion practices for COVID-19 (or any time, really): https://centerformsc.org/10-self-compassion-practices-for-covid-19/

Insert and maintain appropriate boundaries (learning how to say No and set limits).

SIGNS THAT YOU HAVE POOR BOUNDARIES
you tend to...

Hate letting people down
Struggle with making decisions
Feel a lot of guilt when taking care of yourself
Avoid speaking up when your feelings are hurt
Feel burned out
Feel taken advantage of
Say "yes" even when you don't want to
Feel responsible for the happiness of others
Agree with others to keep the peace
Give away too much of your time
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