

QUOTE

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes...including you."

— Anne Lamott

CARING FOR YOURSELF



As home visitors, you give so much of your energy, time, and heart to support families. While this work is deeply rewarding, it can also be difficult and emotionally demanding. Your work exposes you to the challenges and traumas of others, and can lead to burnout, physical and mental health challenges, and even secondary trauma. This is also called "compassion fatigue" and results from the care and concern you feel for the families you serve. That's why taking care of your own mental health is not just important—it's essential.

What is burnout?

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. It can leave you feeling overwhelmed, detached, or ineffective, which affects both your well-being and your ability to support families.

Research shows that our bodies release a chemical when we're stressed, and when others breathe it in it can create stress in them. This may be why all of us pick up on stress in our team and family.

REFLECTION

Use one of the questions below to conduct a daily "energy audit" on yourself:

1. How am I feeling emotionally?
2. How am I feeling physically?
3. What signs of stress or fatigue am I noticing?
4. When am I making time for self-care?
5. Who can I reach out to for support?

TIPS

Here are **three principles to consider to avoid burnout**. They are adapted from the book "The Lazy Genius Way" by Kendra Adachi.

- **Live in the season.** This means recognizing that there are times that we know will be hectic. Recognizing and preparing for those seasons will help us lean into that reality, but also manage it better. For example, knowing that the holidays can be stressful for everyone, what can we do to prepare for it, manage expectations, and adjust regular operations so the season is better for everyone? **Living in the season means letting your frustrations breathe, but not be in charge.** Frustration with present circumstances is real and OK.
- **Ask the magic question.** This highly practical principle helps us identify small and large things we can do early on that will make something we know could be difficult, go a little smoother. It means asking yourself **"What can I do NOW to make life easier LATER?"** Continuing with the example of the holidays, we can ask the following magic question **"What can we do now to make returning from the holidays easier or smoother?"**
- **Schedule rest.** Seems so obvious, right? But rest takes some thought and planning. **What kind of rest?** We often think of rest as physical, but mental rest and emotional rest are important too. **When to rest?** Build in rest before, during or after your busiest seasons. Schedule rest weekly and daily. **How to rest?** Some examples include giving yourself a break from regular tasks, building in unscheduled time, finding a peaceful space to "just be", whether at home or in the community, or setting up an opportunity for meaningful self-care.