

Self-Care Tips for Caregivers

As a caregiver it can be very difficult to hear that your child may have been victim to abuse. A range of emotions and reactions can include:

Shock

- You may find yourself surprised about what has happened and not sure how to respond.

Anger

- You can be angry at the perpetrator for hurting your child but also feel angry with your child for not telling you sooner especially if the abuse was committed by someone you know or a member of the family.

Sadness

- You can be sad for your child and what they experienced and also sad for yourself and the ways the abuse may change your lives.

Anxiety

- Anxiety can come from not being sure of the “right” way to respond to your child and how the abuse could impact your future relationship with them.

Fear

- You may have fear that abuse could happen again or of being unable to prevent it.

All of these reactions make it very important to take care of yourself. Although you were not the victim of abuse, hearing your child’s story can impact you in many ways. You cannot help your loved one if you are in crisis yourself.



Ways to Cope

- Involve yourself in activities or hobbies separate from your loved one’s experience. It can be easy to solely focus on what is happening with them.
- Leisure appointments or fun activities cannot be forgotten about. Make time for them and allow yourself parts of the day to look forward to.

-Keep a journal. Write down what you are feeling and experiencing without judgment. This can be your own private outlet.
-Practice meditation or get involved in mindful, relaxing activities such as yoga. This can help you maintain emotional balance.

More Self Care Suggestions

- Relax: Learn relaxation exercises (BSB can offer suggestions), go to the movies, read, go for a walk
- Time Out: Give yourself a mental health break daily or several times a week
- Set priorities: Do one thing at a time
- Exercise: Physical activity is a proven stress release
- Sleep: If you're having difficulty, seek professional help
- Play: Have outside interests, nurture a circle of friends
- Seek a counselor or therapist: BSB will provide a list of approved providers
- Breath slow, long, deep breaths
- There is no "right" way to feel. Your feelings are normal, appropriate reactions to an abnormal situation

Remember, you need to support yourself and take care of your emotional and physical needs in order to best help the one you love.