



Babies on the Homefront Caregiving While Caring for Your Young Child: The Power of Mindfulness Handout

Caring for others can be very demanding. It is especially demanding to care for both a Veteran and young child. Taking care of yourself is so important when you are managing the care of others. Mindfulness meditation can help you cope with these demands. It can help to support your emotional balance and wellbeing.

Why is Self-Care Important?

- What impact does it have to put others needs above your own? How does it feel? What impact does this have on your physical health? What impact does it have on your emotional health? What about your mental health?
- Without self-care, your needs can get lost in the grind of everyday demands. When you don't pay attention to yourself you risk losing your balance.
- *"How you are is just as important as what you do."* – Jeree Pawl

Self-Care Self-Assessment:

- How do you make the time for self-care in your busy schedule?
- What activities do you love to do, that fulfill you, and that you find most relaxing?
- What changes can you make in your daily and weekly routines to make time for self-care? What resources or supports will you need?
- How can you become more consistent about your self-care? Is there a way for you to set it up as a ritual that you engage in consistently?

What Is Mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is an act of bringing your attention to the present moment. Some people practice by focusing on their breathing. You can also focus on an object or activity such as walking. While you are focusing you will notice thoughts and feelings come to your attention. You don't cling to these thoughts or feelings. You simply observe them and bring your attention back to your focus. When you observe thoughts and feelings you observe without judgement. You observe your thoughts and feelings with kindness.

Benefits of Mindfulness

- Mindfulness encourages you to slow down and be present.
- It helps you get perspective.



- It helps you pay attention to you. It can help you know yourself better.
- It can help you feel centered and calm.
- It can help you be more self-aware.
- It encourages you to judge less and show compassion for yourself and others.
- It can help you be less reactive or overwhelmed.
- It can help you think clearly even under stress.
- Parents are better able to manage their stress. As a result, they can respond well to their children's needs.

Mindfulness Practices

- **Centering practice:** If you want to, close your eyes to remove distractions. Choose your breath as a focus of attention. Start by taking a deep cleansing breath in and out. Then place your attention on the natural movement of your breath. In and out. Notice the thoughts and feelings that come to your attention. Don't cling to the thoughts and feelings. Just observe them with kindness and let them go. Continue to return your focus to your breath until you reach a relaxed state.
- **Pause, notice, breathe, respond:** Pause before you react to a stressful situation, such as a child throwing a tantrum. Notice how your thoughts, feelings and body are reacting. Breathe in deeply and exhale slowly. Calm yourself before responding.
- **Meditation, physical exercise, and staying present in everyday activities:** Find an activity that allows you to focus, relax, and recharge. Engage in activities that you enjoy and look forward to.

Using Mindfulness

- How will you start using mindfulness so you can experience the benefits?
- What will help you incorporate this into your daily life?

Additional Resources

- [What is Mindfulness?](#)
- [Mindfulness for Parents](#)
- [Positive Parenting Infographic](#)
- www.babiesonthefront.org
- [Babies on the Homefront Caregivers Group](#)