

Taking Care of Yourself When Your Child is Sick

A cancer or blood disorder diagnosis impacts the entire family system. The rigors of treatment invariably increase the demands on caregivers who must somehow balance caring for a sick child in addition to other family, work, and community responsibilities. Engaging in self-care during this time is essential to successfully meet your own needs and the needs of your child.

- Barriers to Engaging in Self-Care: It is often helpful to acknowledge current obstacles to self-care before setting new goals or intentions. Barriers can include:
 - Time: Caregivers often have limited time for themselves
 - Standards for Self: Caregivers may believe that they always need to be present for their child
 - Difficulty Seeking Support: Caregivers may feel uncomfortable identifying or asking others for help
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- Recommendations:
 - Remember that your child's health depends on your own health.
 - Start by determining what types of interventions are needed:
 - Self-care: for caregiver stress
 - Additional supports: for difficulty functioning in caregiver roles
 - Types of Self-Care:
 - Physical: eating well, improving sleep, exercise (walking/gym), yoga/stretching
 - Emotional: journaling, expressive writing, coloring, crafting, music, parent groups, online support, meditation, deep breathing, therapy
 - Social: maintaining connections with friends/family in person, via phone, and online
 - Spiritual: religious services, gratitude jar, giving back initiatives
 - Additional Supports:
 - Family
 - Community
 - DFCI/BCH: Psychosocial clinicians, Resource rooms, Hale Center for Families, Zakim Center, free access to Headspace App
 - Online: [Caringbridge.org](https://www.caringbridge.org), [lotsahelpinghands.com](https://www.lotsahelpinghands.com), [signupgenious.com](https://www.signupgenious.com)