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**Ten Tips to Reduce Stress for Parents Working from Home**

There are pros and cons to working from home; but with everyone there, it can be challenging. Here are some tips to create more wellbeing:

1. **TALK!!! Schedule a weekly family meeting to discuss being home together and to set reasonable expectations**. Each person might share *something* *positive* and *something challenging* about being home each week. Discuss responsibilities for basic needs (meals/dog walks/cleaning, etc…), daily schedules, and etiquette (interrupting mom’s meeting, etc…). Get your kids to participate by brainstorming and creating a chart so that everyone is clear on expectations.
2. **Talk to your partner about alternating childcare**. If both parents are working from home, see if you can alternate childcare responsibilities. Find timing that works: every other day; mornings/afternoons; every other weekend. This gives your children time with both of you and gives each of you time off to focus on your needs.
3. **Provide structure** **with a consistent daily schedule**. Even if you are not going to school, the kids won’t be ready to learn if they roll out of bed 10 minutes before they are supposed to be online—and neither will you. It’s important for everyone to get up, engage in hygiene routines, dress, and eat before getting online. Similar routines need to be planned for morning breaks, lunch, after school, dinner, and bedtime.
4. **Get organized**. Have a place for everything. Piles of papers all over your desk or the kitchen table can drive you crazy. Make it part of your family talk to determine where things will be put upon completion or when it’s time for bed. Make sure you put your work away too! You don’t need to be looking at it after you finish each day.
5. **Identify and stop distractions.** Is the TV distracting the kids? Are you checking social media regularly? Create guidelines around how to handle distractions in family meetings. And remember: *kids learn by watching you… not by what you say to them*.
6. **Engage in tasks that require the most focus and sustained attention when the kids are busy or napping.** Here’s your chance to focus on something and get it done, use it!
7. **Get up and out and Take short breaks.** Connecting with nature and moving your body are important for physical and mental health. Go outside for 10 minutes and see how many different kinds of leaves or colors of rocks you can find. Take a walk, swim, roller skate or ride bikes together. When the kids are antsy,tire them out. You will all sleep better.
8. **Find time for self-care.** The airlines have it right… *put your own mask on before you* *try to help the person next to you*. You won’t be good for anyone if you don’t take care of yourself. What are you needing physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually? Take time to identify those needs and meet those needs by carving out time in the schedule. Stick to your plan. You are worth it!
9. **Use Mindfulness.** Take 3-6 long, slow deep breaths to engage your system of rest and digest whenever you feel stressed. Be present! Notice when your mind drifts and return it to the now by connecting with what you are doing through your senses. Even mundane work, like cleaning dishes, can be fun if you look at the bubbles, smell the scents and notice the silkiness on your hands. Get the kids to help and see what you notice.
10. **Use Mindful Self-Compassion.** When emotions are strong, speak to yourself kindly like you would a good friend or your child who is struggling: *This situation is hard. It would be for anyone. You are doing the best you can and that’s all anyone can do. May you accept yourself just as you are… perfectly, imperfect like everyone else. Remember, many people across the world are feeling the same emotion for the same reason. You are not alone. And, this too, shall pass.*

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