

Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Family life can be busy, and we can have a lot of stress in our daily lives. As Indigenous parents, our mental health and wellbeing is linked to our connections with family, community, country and spirit. And we can look after our emotional wellbeing by making time to nurture those connections.

We've all experienced grief from the loss of loved ones in our community. When we're going through stress or grieving, we may feel sad or emotional, have trouble sleeping, lose interest in things we usually enjoy, or struggle with day-to-day parenting tasks.

But children do best when their parents are responsive, caring and use positive parenting strategies. So we need to find a balance between working through our feelings and being there for our children.

First off, don't be afraid to ask for help if you're struggling. Talk to your family and friends and share your feelings with others who understand what you're going through.

Give yourself time to think and relax and heal your spirit. And look after your physical health by keeping up regular exercise, eating healthy, limiting drinking, and getting enough sleep.

Each day, try to make time to do at least one thing you enjoy doing. A few minutes to half an hour can make a big difference to how you feel.

What lifts your spirit?... Getting out in the bush? A big cook up? Listening to some

tunes? Time with family? Whatever it is, make it a priority and notice how it makes you feel.

If you're feeling stressed, try to notice where you feel tense in your body, then relax those tense muscles and take some deep breaths to calm down.

And if you catch yourself having negative thoughts, try to change to more positive and helpful ones like, 'I can cope', 'This will pass', or 'I can do this.'

Cut yourself some slack and don't be too hard on yourself. Taking care of your own wellbeing, and practising self-care, can make you stronger, calmer, and better able to care for your little ones.

Parents have shared how hard it is to find time for their own wellbeing and self-care. It's important to find a balance between work life, home life, and study. And disconnecting everyone from the Internet and being present with your children when you're together:

"As soon as we come home from school we just get out. I think my mental health comes from seeing my children benefit and being happy."

If you're looking for more support, don't hesitate to reach out to parent support programs. They're there to help and support you through the tough times.