

Suggestions for families

- ▶ Try to eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- ▶ Try to exercise for half an hour each day. This can be of any intensity you like. A convenient way of including this may be to play a ball game outside with your child or go for a walk together.
- ▶ Build and maintain positive relationships. Supportive relationships can be a protective factor that help people cope with difficulties. Children, parents, carers and families cope best when they have support. Support may be available through friends, family, health professionals, community organisations and early childhood staff. Being able to draw on support is especially helpful during hard times.
- ▶ Try to spend time alone doing things you enjoy such as reading, writing, swimming or taking photos. This can help you live a balanced life (e.g., a balance between work or family life and time for yourself), relax and appreciate time to yourself.
- ▶ Try to recognise when you are feeling stressed and what might be causing this. This helps to be able to respond appropriately, for example, by relaxing or trying to solve the cause of stress.
- ▶ Try to reduce risk factors and build on protective factors. Recognising when your family is exposed to mental health risk factors and observing how well you are all coping helps work out what to do and what support you need to access to meet your family's needs.
- ▶ Explore other resources that may be able to help, such as family support services or health professionals. Your family doctor can be a good place to start.

For more information on self-care, refer to *Component 4: Helping children who are experiencing mental health difficulties 'Getting help when you need it'*.

Suggestions for staff

- ▶ Be aware of the signs and triggers of stress.
- ▶ Provide families with specific information on topics like being healthy and recognising stress.
- ▶ Help families to recognise their strengths and how well they have been coping if they are having a difficult time.
- ▶ Hold information sessions at your service about families looking after themselves. This could involve guest speakers.
- ▶ Provide families with contact details of health professionals they can access.
- ▶ Encourage the children at your service to look after themselves and explain to parents and carers how you have been doing this.
- ▶ Hold an event at your service for families to get involved in with their children and other families.
- ▶ Try to model looking after yourself so parents and carers can see the benefits.



This resource and further information on the national KidsMatter Early Childhood initiative is available to download at www.kidsmatter.edu.au. The KidsMatter Early Childhood team also welcomes your feedback which can be submitted through the website.



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