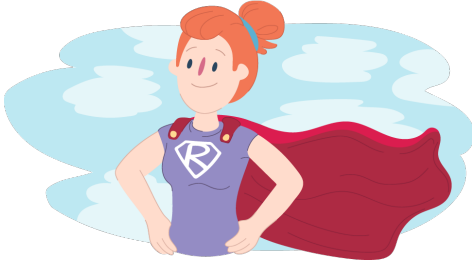


Being Strong Even When Stressed!



You are incredibly valuable. You are the most important person in your child's life. When you're strong, it makes it easier for them to be strong. Being strong doesn't mean you have to be perfect or a super hero all the time. Being strong looks like:

- 1 Recognizing your value.** We all have strengths, skills, and supports that we bring to our families. The way you support and lead your family may look different from the way other parents do. If you're not into doing arts and crafts with your kids like some parents are, that's okay. Use the strengths that you do have and have confidence that your presence and abilities matter.
- 2 Acknowledging your feelings.** We can experience a lot of emotions when going through tough times. We may feel anxious about our well-being or others. We may feel angry over other people's actions. We may feel helpless about the things we can't control. We may feel lonely, isolated, or trapped. We may feel guilty about feeling the way we do or about what we are or are not able to do. These feelings are normal. And it's okay to feel them. What's important is that we express and manage our feelings in healthy ways that don't harm others.
- 3 Being flexible.** It can be frustrating and difficult to make plans when we feel like things are constantly changing. Take a moment to give yourself grace, to remember what's most important, and to come up with a new plan that adjusts to the situation at hand.
- 4 Planning for what you CAN do.** Even when situations feel out of our control, there are often still things that we can control, like how we respond or how we support one another. When difficult decisions arise, brainstorm with others. They may come up with something we haven't thought of yet. Write out all the possible options and choose what would be best for you and your family. We're strongest when we follow through.
- 5 Being kind to yourself.** We must be reasonable with the expectations we set for ourselves and honest about our own limitations. There are times when we are not the best parent we want to be. Sometimes, it's best to simply apologize, forgive ourselves, and try again tomorrow.
- 6 Being willing to ask for help.** We all need help from time to time. It takes courage to put ourselves out there and ask for what we need. Give others the opportunity to help you. Helping each other gives us a sense of meaning and connection. Share what you are finding helpful right now with other parents you know.
- 7 Staying hopeful.** How we talk to ourselves matters. Pay attention to whether the words you are saying (either out loud or in your head) are more positive or more negative. Repeating phrases to ourselves like, "We will make it work," or "We can do this", can help us to stay positive.

What helps you feel strong?