

Looking after ourselves as parents

We know that parents have been under huge pressure for a long time. Lockdown has turned from a sprint into a marathon, so looking after ourselves is becoming even more important. It's much easier to care for others when our own needs are met- a bit like putting on our own life jacket before we try to help someone drowning.

The 30-3-30 approach (drawn from the learn4 mental health website)

What can you do to look after yourself if you have 30 seconds?

- Take three deep breaths, breathing in for three and out for five
- Use a video clip- watch a brief video which you know will make you laugh or feel calmer
- Look outside- tune into what you can see and hear
- Give yourself some attention- put on some moisturiser, wash your face, or brush your hair
- Visit a happy memory- think about a special memory in as much detail as you can

What can you do if you have three minutes?

- Make a hot drink, and feel the warmth of the mug on your hands
- Connect with someone- send a message or photo
- Stand on your doorstep or at your open window- feel what the weather is doing
- Exercise- run intensely on the spot for three minutes, or stretch against a wall
- Have a speed shower!

What can you try if you have 30 minutes?

- Relax in the bath- with some candles, and a book or your favourite movie or music
- Exercise- can you leave the house for a walk with music or a podcast? If not, try a yoga video at home.
- Be entertained- by a good book, magazine, podcast, audiobook, or an episode of a good programme.
- Create something- tackle a nagging DIY project, use your child's art supplies, bake a treat, knit, crochet or sew something.
- Have a video call with a friend or family member whose company you enjoy.

Make a list of some ideas you can try. Whenever you have time, pick an idea from the list. It might take some trial and error to find the ideas which are most helpful to you- that's ok.