PARENTING THROUGH STRESS

WISCONSIN FAMILY CONNECTIONS CENTER

Parenting asks a lot of all of us, and when stress enters the picture, even the closest partnerships can feel stretched. With a little planning and a lot of open, caring communication, you and your partner can lean on each other and grow closer through it.



Prioritize Connection

- Disconnection, not conflict, fractures relationships.
- Schedule uninterrupted time with your partner to create strategies you can use when chaos occurs.
- Be gentle with yourselves. Some days, connection might just be a shared smile across a chaotic room, and that's okay.

Learn Each Other's Needs

- Everyone responds to stress and regulates differently.
- Clarify with your partner whether you want an ear to listen or help figuring out a solution.
- Recognize signs that your partner is experiencing compassion fatigue, burnout, or blocked care* and be honest with them about it.
- Talk with your partner about how you can show up for each other during stressful times. Would they like a hug or space to be alone? Do they need a reminder to breathe deeply? Do they need to listen to music or go for a quick walk?

Take the Blocked Care Assessment Here

Capacity Check In

Divide the emotional labor, not just the physical tasks. Use a simple color-coded system to check in and communicate your capacity to one another.

Green: I have capacity. How can I support you?

Yellow: I am running low. I can handle simple demands, but I need you to cover high demands.

Red: I am feeling overloaded. I need a break before I can reengage.

Parenting through stress isn't easy. But when parents stay connected, communicate openly, and support one another through challenges, they not only restore peace to the household but also model how to build a resilient family.

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