Children's Home Society of North Carolina

Self-Care for the Caregiver: You First!

On an airplane, an oxygen mask descends in front of you; what do you do first? The first rule is to put on your own oxygen mask before you assist anyone else. We must first help ourselves so that we are able to effectively help others.

Caregiving can have many rewards but can also be very stressful. Caregivers are so busy caring for others that they tend to put their own needs on the back burner. The stress of caregiving can affect your health, leading to anxiety, depression, and poor physical health.

The goal of self-care is to reverse the damage of exhaustion, reduce stress and maintain and enhance our short and longer-term health and well-being. It is important to take care of your own needs; your mental health, emotional health, and physical health so that you can provide the best possible care.

Always remember to "Take time to prioritize yourself, especially when you are consumed with prioritizing others."

The Self-Care Oxygen Mask

Face Mask	Take time for yourself and your own needs.
Restraining Strap	Eat a well-balanced diet; drink plenty of water.
Spring	Exercise-take short midday walks.
Entrainment valve	Listen to guided relaxation recordings or

	relaxing music.
Air-Inlet one-way valve (exhalation)	Schedule short rest periods.
Air-Inlet one-way valve (inhalation)	Set limits & be realistic!
Reservoir bag	Utilize your support: Let your family and friends help you.
Oxygen Delivery Tube	Give yourself credit: You are doing great. KEEP GOING!

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