5 Self-Care Tips

for parents of young adults in active addiction to drugs and/or alcohol

"Take care of yourself" is easy advice to give, but when you're a parent navigating a young adult's substance use or recovery, it can be much harder to put into practice. When worry, frustration, sadness, and fear take over, even finding a moment to catch your breath can feel like one more thing on an already full plate. Yet, making space to pause, regroup, and recharge matters. It helps us step out of constant reaction, regain some perspective, and respond with greater calm and clarity. Caring for ourselves doesn't mean caring any less about our young adult. This week, choose **ONE** new strategy to try. **Start small and make it doable!**



1. Pause before responding

Scenario: *Your young adult asks for something that you are uncomfortable giving or doing (money, a ride, a favor, a bed, a cover-up) and your stomach drops.*

Try this: Take a pause, a beat, a breath (for as much time as you need), then say: **"That does not work for me."** Your reasons are yours; explanations are not necessary or helpful. Practice saying it in the mirror until it rolls off your tongue and settles into your body. If you are accustomed to explaining your reasons, this one-liner will initially feel uncomfortable. That's normal.



2. Emotional exit plan

Scenario: *Voices rise. Verbal disrespect. They are high or drunk. Things are escalating. Your chest tightens, your face gets hot, or your stomach hurts.*

Try this: Break the cycle of reacting: excuse yourself to the bathroom. Take **5 deep breaths** and apply **cold water to your forehead** to self-regulate your emotions and clear your mind so you can respond in a way that protects your emotional well-being.



3. Grounding with 5-4-3-2-1

Scenario: *It's 2 a.m. and they haven't answered your text. Your mind is racing through worst cases.*

Try this: Name **5** things you can see, **4** you can touch, **3** you can hear, **2** you can smell, and **1** you can taste. Go slowly, and let your mind come back to the room. Repeat as many times as necessary to calm your nervous system.



4. We heal together

Scenario: *The house is quiet, and you feel alone with it all.*

Try this: Plan ahead: keep a list of family support meetings for every day of the week on your mobile device or calendar. These are rooms where other parents like you share similar experiences and learn from each other. You don't have to figure this out alone. Some free options include: **SMART Recovery Family & Friends**, **ITC Family Support Group**, and **CRAFT groups at Helping Families Help**.

smartrecovery.org/family · itc.cmcffc.org · helpingfamilieshelp.com/groups-for-families



5. Carry a calming scent

Scenario: *You're stuck in a waiting room, a courtroom, a tense gathering or moment, and can't leave.*

Try this: Dab a soothing scent, like lavender, cinnamon, sage, almond or vanilla extract, onto a tissue or small cloth or handkerchief. Carry it with you. When tension or anxiety arises, breathe it in slowly to calm your nervous system.

Parents, we did not cause the addiction and we can't cure or control it. But we can contribute to our young adult's recovery when we are well and doing our own recovery work.

@placideturningpointcoach · placidetlc.com
Placide Turning Point Coaching · Family Recovery & Personal Development Coach
This is support and coaching, not medical or mental health treatment.

You deserve your love.