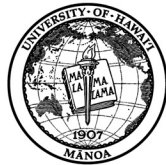


Take a Break

Once in a while, you need to relax and refresh yourself.

- Call a trusted friend and ask them to baby-sit.
- Some agencies have special programs that let you drop your keiki off so you can relax for a few hours.
- If you can't afford a babysitter, exchange babysitting help with a friend or another 'ohana caregiver. You will both get rest, and it won't cost anything.



Cooperative Extension Service
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**'Ohana
Caregivers**

www.hawaii.edu/ohanacaregivers

For more information contact:

**'Ohana
Caregivers**



Raising Keiki? Take Care of Yourself, Too!

Helping to bring up your 'ohana's keiki, you have made a lot of sacrifices. You have lost sleep, given up spare time, neglected your social life, and maybe even taken another job to help support them.

You love your keiki and are doing the right thing by raising them. You are the channel through which the culture is passed. But sometimes you may feel tired, stressed, lonely, isolated, and even depressed. These feelings are perfectly normal. Don't forget that in order to be able to take care of them, you must first take care of yourself. This pamphlet will give you some ideas about taking better care of yourself so that you can take better care of your keiki.

Emotional Strains

Bringing up keiki can be lots of work and may cause you to feel emotions that make you uncomfortable.

- You may feel angry about having to change your own life and plans.
- You may feel guilty. You might think it's your fault that your son, daughter, or other family member can't take care of their children well enough.
- You may feel stressed and overwhelmed.

Remember, the situation is not your fault! You are making a difference in their lives. The rest of this brochure suggests some actions that will help you remain positive and do the best job you can.

Face Your Feelings

Keiki can challenge you in ways that you never thought possible. Sometimes it's difficult to keep your cool when they are pushing your buttons. Here are some suggestions for keeping calm.

- Every 'ohana caregiver feels the same way you do, so be gentle on yourself.
- Admit what you are feeling. Just because you are angry, you don't have to act on that anger.
- Remember that you are the adult, and you have skills for managing your feelings that the keiki may not yet have discovered.
- Have everyone take a 3–5 minute breather to cool down.



After the immediate situation is over, you can take steps to prevent feelings from building up to unmanageable levels.

- Talk with your friends, family, or a caring professional about what you feel.
- Surround yourself with positive people. Join a group of caregivers in the same situation to share resources.
- Plan in advance for how you can handle difficult situations. While you are calm, you can think clearly and come up with good solutions.

Guard Your Health

You can best take care of your keiki when YOU are healthy and feel good. By setting a healthy example, you are giving a gift.



- Get regular checkups and take prescribed medications.
- Try not to smoke or partake in substances that can harm your health.
- Eat healthy and well-balanced meals. You can teach keiki healthy nutrition habits by having them cook with you.
- Invite your keiki to exercise with you. They will enjoy it, and it will be healthy for them. It can also improve your mood.