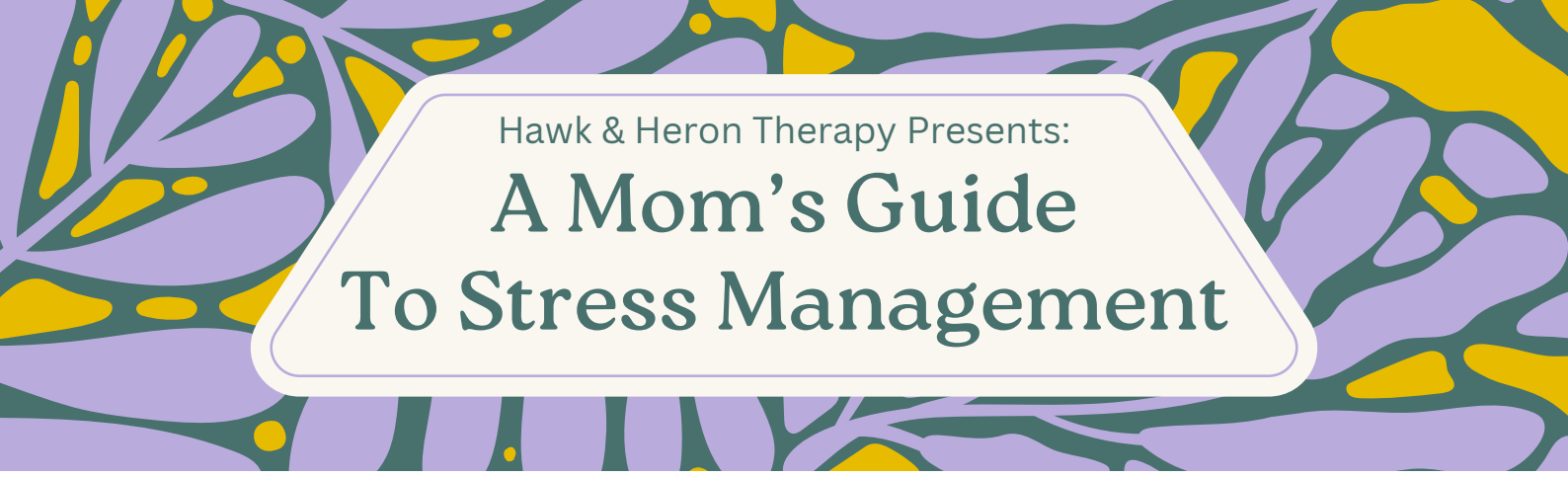




Hawk & Heron Therapy Presents:

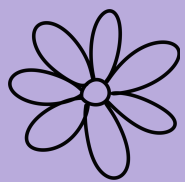
A Mom's Guide To Stress Management

Presented by Hawk & Heron Therapy Services
Treating Anxious Moms Since 2023

Moms today are under a new and different type of stress. Whether we work in the home, outside of the home, or some combination of both - we are carrying more weight than moms from previous generations. The unrelenting pressure of performing motherhood never lets up. Best case scenario when we dare to “take a break” we are bombarded with advice, criticism, “hacks”, and perfectionism dressed up as curated family photos in perfectly imperfect coordinated outfits (#blessed). Worst case we’re shamed for not “savoring every moment”. It’s... a lot.

It is absolutely impossible for moms (or any human) to avoid stress altogether. It will happen to each of us. The goal is not that we don’t experience it or don’t react to it - The goal is that we can move smoothly between stress and calm without getting stuck! The longer we are stuck in stress, the greater impact that stress will have on our minds, bodies, and relationships.

Want to develop the skill set to be the kind of mom who actually feels as good your curated social media feed looks? Same. Let’s do this together!

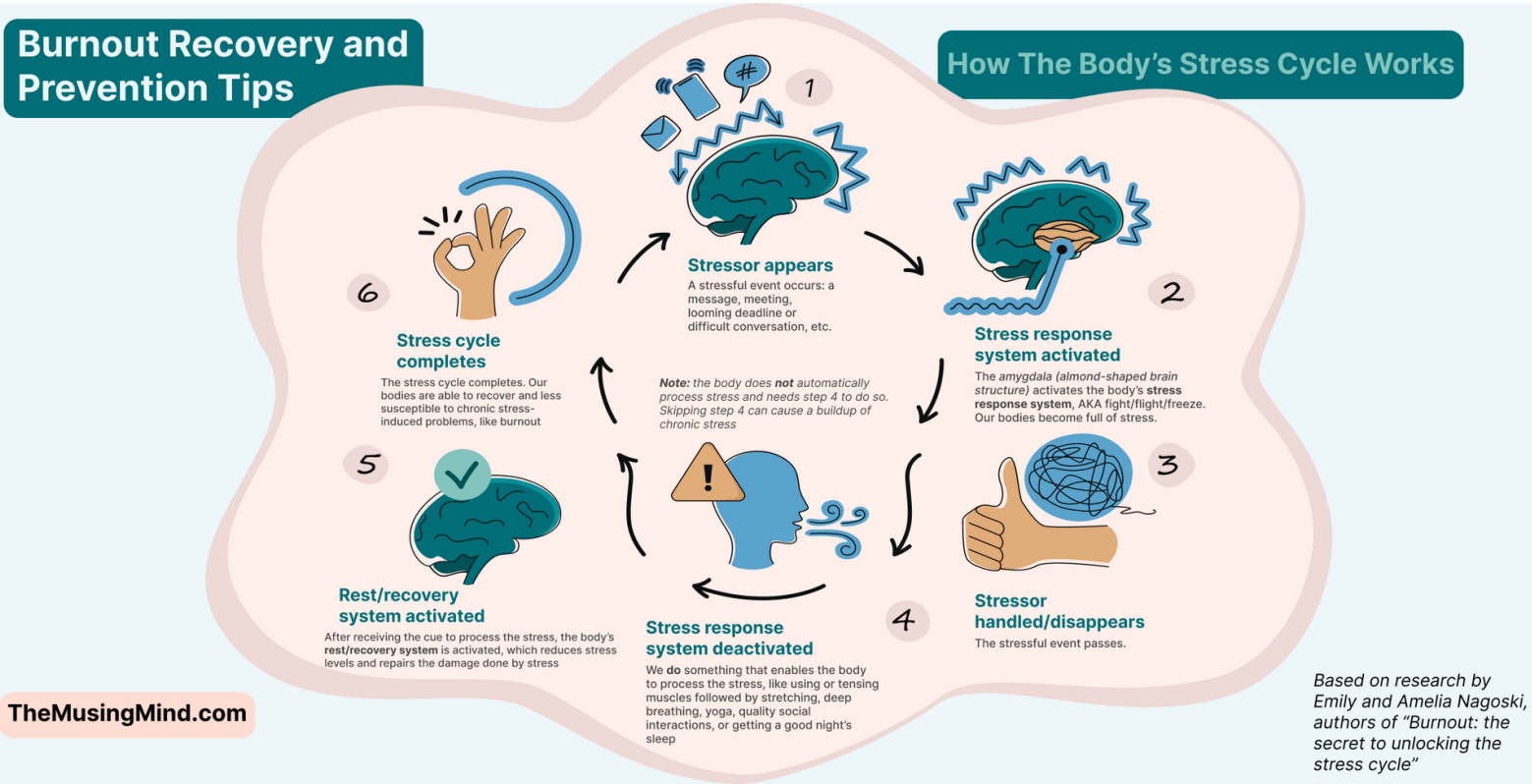


The Stress Cycle

Stress comes in as many shapes and sizes as our kiddos. What one mom finds stressful might be another mom’s walk in the park. Much of what we experience as stressful has little to do with the actual event and more to do with our biology, life experiences, trauma histories, and underlying beliefs about our own skills and abilities to cope.

When a stressor appears our Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) is activated; many know this as our “fight/flight system”. While this system gets a bad rep, it is GOOD that it kicks in - that means your body is working like it’s supposed to. Ideally, the activation of your ANS gives your body what it needs to resolve the stressor. Now we can begin the process of deactivating the stress

response (Tips on how to do this below!) and move on with our lives thus completing the stress cycle and reducing the likelihood of chronic stress build up. Yay!



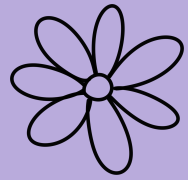
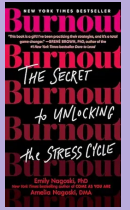
This is how the body is designed to work when faced with concrete, time-limited stressors. Pretty straight forward. However, motherhood is NOT straight forward. In fact, modern motherhood is comprised on numerous competing stressors which are often poorly defined and/or chronic in nature. Yikes! Our ANS finds these tricky to navigate and therefore might need help when it comes to step 4. According to experts these are the top 7 strategies for helping to deactivate your stress response cycle and reduce the build up of chronic stress:

Movement	Breathing	Positive Social Exchange	Laughter	Physical Touch	Crying	Creative Expression
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Want to learn more about completing the stress cycle to prevent or recover from burnout?

Check out: “Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle” by Drs. Emily and Amelia Nagoski

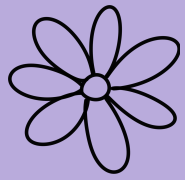


The Foundation

So now we understand the interaction between our ANS and our experience of stress. How do we make sure that our ANS has everything it needs to function effectively? We create a solid foundation, of course! And the good news is, YOUR foundation is made up of much of the good, healthy stuff we trying to get our kids to do.

These simple actions at as your metabolic resources, fueling your ANS and ensuring your body is functioning optimally. While it may be challenging to hit your goals across all 5 domains, do your best to make sure you're offering your body these resources consistently. Anything else you do to “regulate” your nervous system sits atop this essential foundation.

Sleep	Sunlight	Movement	Nutrition	Hydration
				
Aim for 8 hours per night. If sleep is not an option, seek meaningful rest.	Aim for 10 min of sunlight within 30 min of waking, as well as throughout the day.	Exercise, yes. And mindful movement throughout the day to help emotion move through the body.	Fuel your body consistently throughout the day with focus on protein and fiber to support energy.	Drink your water, girl. Aim to drink your body weight in ounces of H2O daily. Avoid excess caffeine, limit alcohol.



Unsexy Self-Care

“Self-care” is an extremely lucrative industry, predicated on selling women products and “fixes” to help us manage stress. In reality, much of what is sold to women as self-care is really based in aesthetics and often further separates women from our authentic needs. I can’t tell you how many times I have asked women in my office about their self-care practices and they respond by giving me the rundown of their 36-step Korean skincare routine. But suddenly when I ask how that routine helps them survive the marathon of daily life, they’re awfully quiet. In fact, often times what is recommended to women as “self-care” interferes with our physical, social, emotional, and financial wellness. Make that make sense!

REAL self-care is not about aesthetics, optimization, “hacks”, or any other buzzwords trending at the moment. Real self-care is about creating systems of support that honor your humanity.

Unsure where to begin? Check in with these 4 Principles for Real Self-Care*:

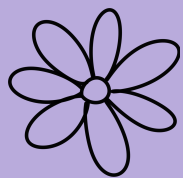
- ☐ Real self-care requires boundaries and moving past guilt
- ☐ Real self-care means treating yourself with compassion
- ☐ Real self-care brings you closer to yourself
- ☐ Real self-care is an assertion of power



***The tenets of “Real Self-Care” come directly from Dr. Pooja Lakshmin, MD. She is an expert in this area and her book is an incredible tool!**

Want to learn more? Check out her book “Real Self-Care: Crystals, Cleanses, and Bubble Baths Not Included”



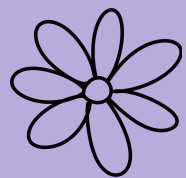


Tolerating Distress

About to blow your top?

Not all stress can be mitigated, processed, or shared. Sometimes it has to be tolerated. When stress turns into distress, engage with your body to “TIPP” your chemistry! Here’s how:

T: Temperature	Use ice or cold water Place an ice pack on your wrists or back of neck. Or splash cold water on your face. Step outside on a cold day.	This initiates your body’s “diver’s response” triggering fight/flight in our ANS; prompts deep breathing and shifts perspective.
I: Intense Exercise	Do short bursts of intense exercises (burpees, run stairs, push ups, etc). Raise your heart rate!	This initiates production of adrenaline, cortisol, and other hormones to keep the body up regulated.
P: Paced Breathing	Practice counting your breath. Extend your exhale. My favorite is 4-5-9 breathing: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 5, exhale for 9.	This helps shift your body out of fight/flight and begins to lower HR and signal safety to the body.
P: Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Tense, hold, and release large muscle groups starting at the top of the head and working down to the toes. Pair your release with a BIG exhale.	This helps the muscle groups release the stress/activation hormones that were triggered and prompts the body to return to homeostasis.



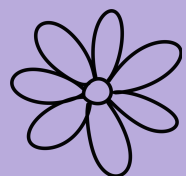
Villages and Villagers

A crucial element of stress management in particular is support. If we can prevent the accumulation of stress, we are in far better shape to remain regulated and equipped to handle the stressors that arise. We've been told throughout motherhood that 'it takes a village'. This is true. Building and fostering that village takes work; and at the heart of that work is the vulnerability to admit that we need help. Allowing other to see you and support you in your struggles and stressors endears them to you and increases the degree of closeness and intimacy. Being a member of a village requires participation. Being a member of a village requires all villagers to work smarter, not harder for the greater good of the community. Who is your community? What would it take to foster and build your village?



“[This] was a hard lesson for me to learn, which is: actually, people feel closer to you when they get to take care of you, too”

-Amy Poehler



Need Support?



This is where Hawk & Heron comes in. We specialize in treating women struggling with anxiety, stress, depression, and PTSD. We know the heaviness of the load a mom carries. And we know the incredible relief that comes with getting help to carry it.

Rebecca Ray, owner and lead therapist at Hawk & Heron has been working in the mental health world since 2010. Upon launching H&H in 2023, her mission became clear: Supporting women so that they can become embodied, empowered, and realize they're enough. This philosophy is infused in every interaction with clients.

Rebecca has extensive training in modern mind-body treatment approaches with incredible scientific backing and has seen hundreds of women thrive.

Whether you want to cozy up in her Leawood, KS office or meet from the privacy of your own home in Kansas, Missouri, Florida, or Maine; Rebecca is ready to support you!



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