

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Being a leader is challenging; being a leader during challenging and uncertain times is even more daunting. To some of us it is counter to our belief as a leader to say.... It is OK to NOT be OK.

As we are all in this collective experience of the unknown, we need to allow ourselves permission to feel - feel confused, feel angry, feel tired, and feel like we are connecting on levels we may have never experienced before; such as social media! I have been following the work of Brene Brown for some time now and have been leaning on her research to remind myself that I can have feelings of uncertainty and still be a brave and courageous leader.

In her book, *Daring Greatly*, Brown reminds leaders that vulnerability causes discomfort, and for many people, including leaders, we try to dismiss these feelings. Yet, these are the feelings that great leaders acknowledge and name so they can find the place where they are needed and work with others to find collective and creative ways to emerge with stronger relationships, commitments and programs.

I am writing this today for everyone who feels alone, uncertain and just plain scared. You are not alone, and you have the ability and courage to weather this storm. Use this time to stay committed to all your relationships; especially staff, children and families.

We know we are essential, and we know we serve a population that even on a good day does not have a voice. We are the voice for our children and families and our charge is to provide ways to acknowledge our own vulnerabilities and work with our program teams and then the broader early learning/childcare community to help everyone understand why the birth to 5 age span is vital and must be supported. When we look back, ask yourself this question, "Did we practice the same principles of social-emotional learning and well-being with ourselves and with our staff that we promote with our children each and every day?"

Here are a few resources to help us feel connected:

<https://dieecpd.org/>
www.childcareaware.org
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
<https://brenebrown.com>
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>
<https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/>