

## **Caring for yourself so you can care for your children:**

- Your children need the comfort that you usually provide now more than ever.
- It is not easy to support others when you are feeling upset, frightened, unsure, or overwhelmed. These natural reactions occur when you are away from home and you have experienced big events.
- Very young children can feel your stress. We are offering advice to help you take care of yourself so you can offer the comforting care you usually provide your children.

## **Some tips to reduce your stress:**

1. Stay in tune with your body. It is easy during a stressful situation to forget to meet your own basic needs. Ask yourself: When was the last time I ate? Slept? Cleaned myself up?
2. Do a check for muscle tension in your body—do you feel it in your neck, back, stomach? Stretch your body. Children may want to stretch with you. This can be fun.
3. Take 5–10 minutes to sit in your space, or step outside, and listen to your breathing.
4. Inhale for 2 seconds and exhale for 4 seconds, then say to yourself an affirming statement (e.g., “I’ve got this.”).
5. If you are with another adult, take turns being with the children and letting the other one nap.
6. Reach out for help—talk to the shelter workers, contact your “go to” people, talk to other families on a similar journey. You are not alone!
7. When you are overwhelmed, remind yourself that this will not last forever and is only temporary.
8. Remember: You made it to a safe space with your child(ren). Give yourself a pat on the back! You are keeping them safe during a hard time!