

Self-Care for Caregivers of Children with Special Needs



Katy Oberle, MS, IMFT

Licensed Independent Marriage and Family Therapist

Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders

.....Nationwide Children's Hospital.....





- Parents of children with developmental, psychiatric, or learning disorders are at an increased risk for:
 - Anxiety and depression
 - Health complications
 - Fatigue and insomnia
 - Marital problems



YOU CAN'T POUR
FROM AN
Empty
Cup.
TAKE CARE
OF YOURSELF
FIRST.

SEVEN PILLARS OF SELF-CARE

1

Knowledge
&
Health
Literacy



2

Mental
wellbeing



3

Physical
Activity



4

Healthy
Eating



5

Risk
avoidance



6

Good
hygiene



7

Rational
use of
products
& services





- Increased subjective well-being
- Reduced psychological symptoms
- Reduced emotional reactivity
- Improved behavioral regulation

Keng, S. L., Smoski, M. J., & Robins, C. J. (2011). Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: a review of empirical studies. *Clinical psychology review*, 31(6), 1041–1056. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2011.04.006

Mindfulness means...

- “Self-regulated, present-moment awareness that welcomes all without preconception or judgment, accepting ‘what is’ with curiosity and compassion.”

-Diane Gehart, 2012



<https://youtu.be/w6T02g5hnT4>

How to Practice Mindfulness

1

Take a seat. Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.

2

Set a time limit. If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as 5 or 10 minutes.

3

Notice your body. You can sit or kneel however is comfortable for you. Just make sure you are stable and in a position, you can stay in for a while.

4

Feel your breath. Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes out and as it goes in.

5

Notice when your mind has wandered. When you get around to noticing this—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.

6

Be kind to your wandering mind. Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.



Shower Meditation

Water in the shower creates its own meditation music, and it's something you have to do anyway. It's a great alternative if it feels difficult to sit with your eyes closed.

Notice how the water feels on your skin, in your hair. Listen to the sounds of the water droplets. As you clean, apply soap to areas that feel tense and rub into them. Send your breath to those areas. How does the water feel running over your head, down your neck? Breathe deep into the scents around you. When you are finished showering, take a step back from the water before turning it off. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Consider repeating a mantra that readies you for your day.



SELF- Compassion BREAK

When you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed or sad try taking a self-compassion break.

Now say to yourself slowly:

THIS IS A MOMENT OF SUFFERING.

SUFFERING is a part of LIVING. I AM NOT ALONE.

HOW CAN I CARE FOR MYSELF RIGHT NOW?

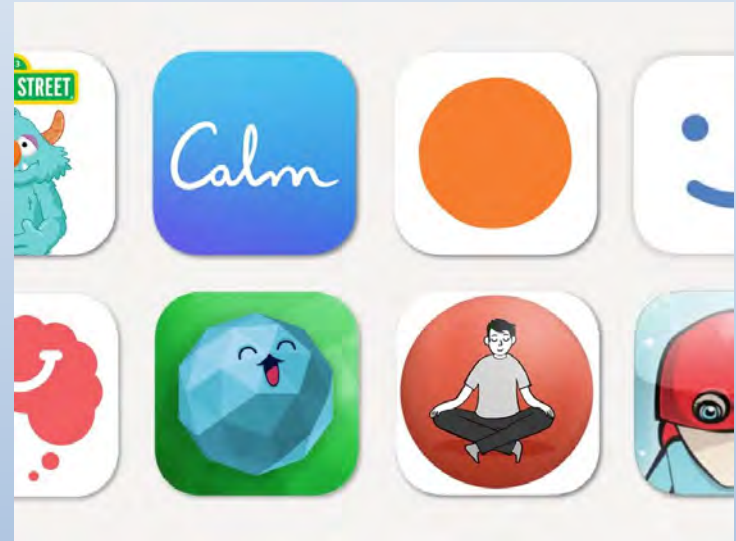


“Hand on the heart” guided meditation for self-care



Mindfulness apps

- For kids:
 - *Stop, Breathe & Think*
 - *Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame*
- For teens and adults:
 - *Calm*
 - *Headspace*
 - *10% Happier*
 - *Insight Timer*



Thank you!

Questions?

Comments?

