

THE POWER OF MINDFUL PARENTING

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Together, all the way.®



Mindful Parenting



Examining Ourselves

- Understand our automatic reactions and the true intention of our heart
- Raising awareness allows the dots to connect
- Put aside all judgements of self & others
- Let go of critical thoughts
- Mindfulness is an approach to daily life
- Energy will shift as you interact with your child



Research shows that Mindfulness can help individuals...

- Increase memory, attention and productivity
- Reduce anxiety and depression
- Improve emotional regulation
- Improve relationships
- Build resilience
- Improve sleep
- Boost Immunity
- Help cope with stress
- Lessen physical pain and sickness
- Reduce chronic illness



Inventory

- How do we tune into ourselves?
- In seconds we can assess “Drop in” at key transition times

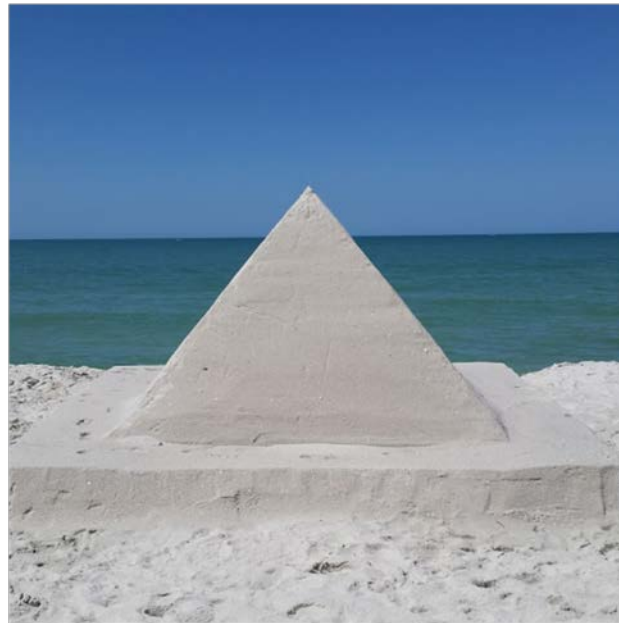
“The greatest musicians with the greatest instruments in the world, still tune first to themselves and to each other. Meditation in some sense is like tuning your instrument before you take it out on the road.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn, ***Founder of Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)***



Moving from external to internal- observing through the senses

- Move from external to internal
- Observe environment through your senses
- What do you see, feel, hear?
- Ground yourself
- Drop into yourself as you settle into your external surroundings



Notice your thoughts

- Observe your thoughts, just note what is revealed
- No processing, analyzing, or problem solving
- Be honest without self criticism
- Return to your anchoring breath



Notice your physical self

- What sensations come into awareness?
- Try breathing into those areas of pain or tension



Notice your emotions

- Be completely transparent with yourself
- Try not to categorize as good or bad feelings
- Let go of the “shoulds”
- It’s normal to have all types of feelings, even intense emotions
- It’s ok to feel yet it’s not always ok to act on every emotion
- Feelings pass through just like a weather system does



Explore your heart state: open or closed?

- Vulnerability may be felt when examining our heart state. Do you feel open or closed?
- Check in with your level of compassion
- Feeling overwhelmed or depleted is a sign for needed self-care



Meditation

- Determine four-word phrase to center yourself
- Example: Role Model Loving Kindness
- In midst of interaction, this can be a grounding tool
- Allows you to regain perspective
- Gives opportunity to take ownership ones reactions



Acceptance: Let go or be dragged

- Non-attachment takes constant practice
- Life is full of “speed bumps” beyond our control
- What if we embraced the unexpected?
- Acceptance requires reconditioning ourselves
- We conserve our energy the less we resist things outside of our control



Purposefully Paying Attention

- Assess your child's emotion—pay attention to their body language and tone; tune into their energy and trust your intuition; pause to sense of what they might be need
- Make direct eye contact, use a gentle soothing tone
- Discover what sensory stimuli your child responds to
- Refrain from reacting automatically; remember the concept of mirror neurons own the energy you bring to the interaction
- If you feel flooded or reactive pause; take a few deep breaths from the diaphragm. (see Resource page with link to stress management recordings)



Tuning into your child

- You know your child better than anyone
- You know their expressions, gestures, posture, etc.
- Their actions and non-verbals reveal more than their words can express
- Tune into what you sense about your child and the situation
- Pause. Observe. Feel.



Potential Triggers for Parents/Caregivers

- Trying to control circumstances
- Ruminating
- Blaming
- Rushing to judgement
- Anticipating the worst
- Judging ones emotions
- Negative self-talk
- Worrying
- Judging others



Tips for Parents/Caregivers

- Name the emotion
- Be aware of one's surroundings
- Use your senses as a portal
- Savoring something positive/ recall a pleasant time
- Gratitude/ compassion
- Addressing what your body reveals to you
- Extending grace to yourself/others
- Don't add pressure to be an expert, you do not have to have all the answers
- Collaborate with your child's treatment team
- Asking your supports for what you need
- Try not to personalize circumstances
- Adapt with each moment/ stay flexible
- Check your internal temperature before responding



Takeaways from Today

- Take transition time to tune into your surroundings, thoughts, body, emotions and your heart
- Always remember you are the role model, step away if you need to reset
- Your child/ teen is in a continual state of development; changing from day to day
- Be adaptable, practice acceptance, and let go
- Each situation is in flux; this helps one get through the challenging ones and to savor the precious exchanges
- Observe your child and trust what your intuition reveals
- Connect through eye contact; use a warm tone of voice



Recommended resources:

Visit Cigna.com for the following resources:

- Stress Management Tool Kit

www.cigna.com/individuals-families/health-wellness/stress-management-toolkit

- Mindfulness-Stress Management recordings

www.cigna.com/individuals-families/health-wellness/climb-mindfulness-podcasts

- Explore Medical Topics, A-Z

www.cigna.com/individuals-families/health-wellness click on Autism category



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