
Parenting Success:

Managing Stress while Raising an Autistic Child

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Introductions

What are you hoping to learn from today's session?

**What's been your experience
raising a an autistic child?**

Experiences Can Include:

- Pride
- Joy
- Love
- Sense of meaning/purpose
- Hope
- Acceptance
- Jealousy
- Resentment
- Grief
- Overwhelm
- Isolation
- Frustration

**What are some strengths your family
has developed (or is developing)
raising an autistic child?**

Strengths can include

JOY in the everyday

Being able to celebrate – the SMALL!

Learning to find your/your family's voice

Joining a Support Network; Finding YOUR people

Acceptance - of your child, self and family

Valuing other perspectives

Sense of meaning – Your OWN

**What are some challenges
you've experienced raising an
autistic child?**

Challenges of raising an autistic child can include:

- Learning about autism
- Researching & accessing medical care, therapy, resources and/or education
- Emotional & physical demands of caregiving
- Advocating for your child
- Isolation
- Judgment
- Discrimination/Able-ism
- Financial stressors (cost of care; reduction in parental work hours to care for child)
- Fear and worry
 - Your child's (now and in the future)
 - Am I doing the right thing? Am I doing enough?

Family challenges can include...

- Balancing needs of other children
- Balancing caring for older parents
- Need for time for self, partner
- Having too much on the “plate”
- Work/Career
- All the normal life stressors

A close-up photograph of a spider web, with its intricate spiral and radial patterns clearly visible. The web is set against a dark, out-of-focus background of green foliage, which creates a bokeh effect with soft, glowing light spots. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat somber, reflecting the challenges discussed in the text.

Many of these challenges are Systemic.

You're NOT inadequate...

We live in a society in which raising an autistic child becomes overwhelming.

Can feel like Burnout

Burnout impacts
parent/caregiver... and the
family





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You Can't Pour from an Empty Cup



Put Your Life Jacket on First



Importance of tending to self as parent/caregiver...

When you nurture yourself...

You nurture your child...

And can be in it for the “long haul”

Marathon vs. sprint



But....

It's expensive

I don't have the time

That's one more thing
on my plate

I have more important
things to do

It's selfish

In reality...

Can be free!

Small amounts of time

Goal of reconnection and energizing

Mitigates burnout

Helps us meet challenges;
be in it for “the long haul”

Self care vs. Selfish

Everyday Mindfulness



Everyday Mindfulness

- Cup of coffee/tea
- Sit outside on porch/deck
- Take a walk
- Coloring
- Shower/Bath
- Look at a piece of art
- Journaling
- Even while cooking, driving, etc.



Everyday Mindfulness

- Five senses grounding
- Three breathes
- Say I'm overwhelmed, I need to take a break! (Model it)
- Notice moment of joy and happiness too! – Stop and savor them! Allow yourself to celebrate them!



Everyday Mindfulness

Positive time in - five minutes
a day – as a form of everyday
mindfulness





Messages of success...

How do they help us?
How do they sometimes get
in the way?

Can come from
Family of origin
Culture
Society
Expectations
The “shoulds”

How do YOU Define Success for YOUR Family

**What is success in
YOUR family...
With YOUR child?**

What matters to me/us?

What values do we want
to share?

What would be
meaningful for me? My
child?

What is our family's
definition of success?
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Success can be

Working Hard

Living with caring and love

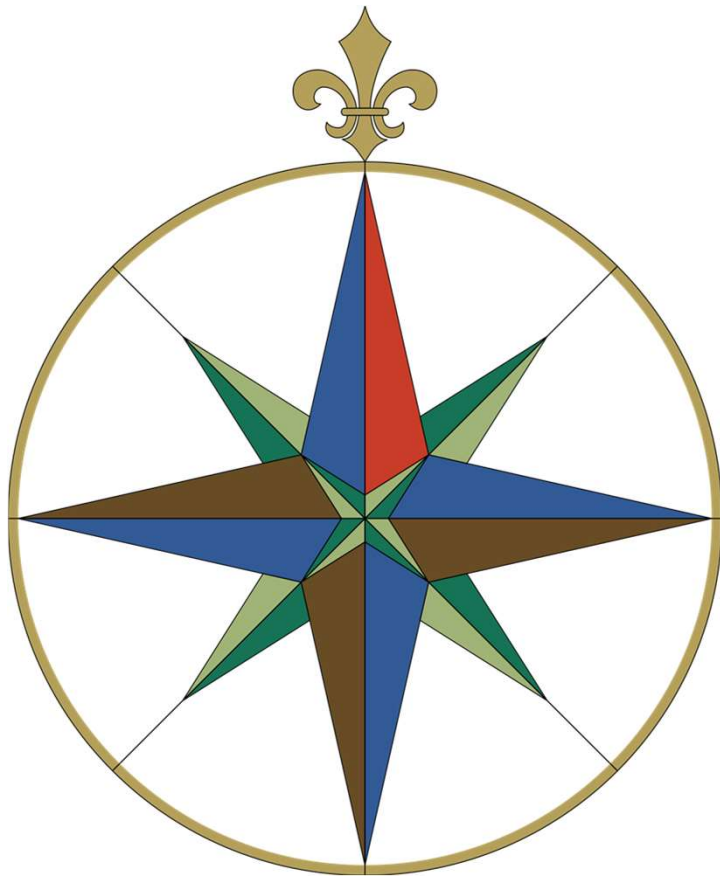
Being willing to try (even
when things are hard)

Being trustworthy

Giving back (each person in
their own way)

Showing respect to elders

Growing in independence



Putting first things first
Knowing what matters
most

Small steps...in the
direction you want to go

This perspective can
reduce stress

Supportive Community



Tending to co-parenting

When there's more than one adult raising a child...

Scheduling time to discuss caregiving

Use technology to stay connected

Show support & appreciation

Tending to co-parenting

When there's more than one adult raising a child...

Build communication skills (speaker/listener)

Help one another get a break

Skills and strategies you can build and develop...

Let's Continue the Conversation

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Sessions are available in person or via telehealth. Consulting/workshop services available
