

Emotional Regulation, Mindfulness and Holiday Stress

Mindful Parenting: Techniques for Practicing Emotional Regulation

(Drawn from Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT))

Understand and name your emotions; identify them and know what they do for you.

- Ask yourself questions about what you are feeling; what is it, what prompted it, does your emotion fit the facts?

Decrease the frequency of unwanted emotions, by changing them once they start

- Step back and get unstuck; shift attention away from the emotion you are feeling.

Decrease emotional vulnerability and increase resiliency

- Accumulate positive emotions and recollections of pleasant events, build your emotional muscle through practice, anticipate strong emotions and map out your response.
- Physical well-being matters by practicing **Please**:

Treat Physical Illness

Balance Eating

Avoid Mood Altering Substances

Balance Sleep

Exercise

Build your reservoir of positive activities:

- Short term: do and feel things that make you feel good and, whenever possible, try not to focus on worries.
- Long term:
 - Don't avoid or procrastinate doing those things that you don't want to face. Putting them off creates additional anxiety and stress.
 - Set goals for yourself related to what you value. Make these things that you **can** accomplish.
 - Pick one of the goals and make a plan with achievable action steps. Include a way to measure and keep track of your progress.
 - Get to work! Start immediately on the first action step.
 - Give yourself credit for each action step and share your success. Celebrate the accomplishment of your goal.
 - Repeat.
 - Reflect on how your achievement impacts your emotional well-being and regulation. You're building a kind of mental muscle that supports emotional resiliency.

Curious to try meditation?

Check out the spenj.org website for more information or go to freemindfulness.org for "Mindfulness of Breathe" and other free guided meditation exercises.

Reducing Holiday Stress

When carrying out holiday tasks, shift focus away from getting things done and ticking items off your to-do list, pause and think about what your traditions--whether it is what you do, eat or decorate--and think about what they mean to you. Make this a family conversation: share what these traditions make you feel personally like family memories and emotions.

Share the Joy: make a point of practicing kindness. Check out the Kindness Calendar for ideas at Action for Happiness: <http://www.actionforhappiness.org/kindness-calendar>

Tips for Talking with Someone You Disagree With

- Before the conversation begins, use the techniques for regulating your emotions and relaxing your body. Remind yourself of techniques to counteract your emotional reflexes.
- Start the conversation with open-ended questions and statements: “Why do you feel this way?” and “Help me to understand your position...”
- Be respectful, even when you disagree. Try to understand why a person feels the way they do.
- Calmly present your own position or point-of-view.
- Create common ground, even if it is unrelated to what you’re talking about.
- Agree to keep talking even if no resolution is reached.
- Offer options for resolution or compromise
- Your goal isn’t winning the argument or convincing the other person; the goal is finding an agreement, which may just be an acknowledgment of differences.

Steps to Unplug and Tune out the Noise from Social Media and the News

1. Create a parking lot for your family’s technology.
2. Limit when you check your devices – even if you need to be on-call for work, carve out a block of time where you commit to not checking email or social media.
3. If the news is making you crazy, create playlists of music or entertaining (but not political comedy) podcasts.
4. Establish a routine for when you check the headlines. Don’t do it first thing in the morning, during the witching hour between the end of the school/work day and dinner.
5. Use a timer to limit the time spent on social media. If you’re really hooked, set up “parental controls” for yourself!
6. Don’t take your device to bed; even better, don’t use a screen for the hour before you go to sleep.
7. Find ways for your family to be together without cell phones in hand – family dinner or game night, outdoor play, or shared hobbies.
8. When you get together with friends, have everyone agree to not use their phones or tablets.



Find the slides from today’s workshop, today’s handout and other articles and resources about Emotional Regulation and Mindfulness at http://www.supportingparentssexnj.org/en/further-reading-a-z/wpbdp_category/cope-packets/.

There are additional materials available at our website:

((<http://www.supportingparentssexnj.org/en/featured-articles-en/emotional-regulation/>) including an article, [Mindful Parenting: Getting Your Emotions Under Control](#), a collection of additional resources if you want to read more in depth about the topic and suggestions for “Taking Action.”

Mark your calendar for our next workshop on Saturday, January 20th: Countdown to a Successful Launch: Teens and Young Adults.

Check out our Facebook group: Cope Center – [Supporting Parents of Essex County, NJ](https://www.facebook.com/supportingparentssexnj) ([spenj.org](https://www.facebook.com/supportingparentssexnj))