ISOLATION
CARING FOR A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

» ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF PARENTING A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, IS FEELING ALONE.

» WHY??
WHY ISOLATION OCCURS...

» Diagnosis
» Family and friends
» Attempting to get your child into early intervention.
» Negotiating an IEP with school.
» Calls from school.
» Explaining outburst at school.
» Extracurricular activities for your child.
WHY ISOLATION OCCURS...

» Play dates.
» Trying to help your child make friends.
» Conversations with moms.
» Help a child stand up to bullying.
» Explain absences from work.
» Trying to nurture a marriage.
» Fighting with insurance companies for coverage.
» Managing the transition to adulthood.
FINDING YOURSELF THINKING...

» “I AM SO ALONE!”
» “NOBODY CARES!”
» “NOBODY UNDERSTANDS!”
» “I FEEL DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER PARENTS!”
FINDING YOURSELF FEELING...

» ANGER
» DENIAL
» ENVIOUS
» EXHAUSTED
» FRUSTRATED
» GRIEF
» GUILT
» LOSS OF SELF
» OVERWHELMED
» SADNESS
» SHAME
FEELING LONELINESS

» Although the definition of loneliness is the state of solitude or being alone, loneliness is actually a state of mind.

» An unpleasant response to isolation or lack of companionship.

» It’s not about being alone, it is about the PERCEPTION of FEELING alone or isolated that matters most.
ISOLATION CAN EFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

» Aggression
» Alcohol and drug abuse
» Antisocial behavior
» Anxiety
» Decreased memory/learning
» Depression
» Increase stress level
ISOLATION CAN EFFECT YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH.

- Cardiovascular disease
- Chronic pain
- Digestion issues
- Increased levels of cortisol and epinephrine
- Stroke
- Weaken immunity
3 STAGES OF AUTISM ISOLATION SYNDROME
REBECCA SPERBER M.S., MFT

» **STAGE 1**: ISOLATION WITHIN YOUR FAMILY; not communicating emotions.

» **STAGE 2**: PHYSICAL ISOLATION; ceasing physical contact to help keep emotions buried.

» **STAGE 3**: SOCIAL ISOLATION; finding yourself wanting to isolate to feel more connected to your child. Losing yourself within your child’s diagnosis.
“Isolation provides its own form of comfort, but not without a profound loss.” Rebecca Sperber M.S., MFT
IMPROVING ISOLATION: SOCIAL

» Develop a support system.
» Engage in support groups, social media, community programs etc..
» Connect with parents with “typical kids” so they can learn about your child’s special needs.
» Educate others to prevent fears and prejudices.
IMPROVING ISOLATION: SOCIAL

» Get involved with your child’s school.
» Communicate with school staff on a regular basis.
» Take turns. “Off duty time”.
» Find babysitters. Date night.
IMPROVING ISOLATION: EMOTIONAL

» Humor
» Write down what you are feeling.
» Write or think about what you are thankful for.
» Acknowledge your emotion, process it, then release the emotion. “Let it go!”
» Counseling
IMPROVING ISOLATION: PHYSICAL

» Work out. A natural way to increase levels of serotonin. e.g. yoga, running club
» Get outside. Fresh air.
» Change location. A change of scenery can provide a different perspective.
IMPROVING ISOLATION: SPIRITUAL

» Empowering statements: Positive Affirmations
» Contemplation
» Meditation
» Religion
The only way we can be there for our children is to be there for ourselves.
Thank you!

» QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS???
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