THE CENTER FOR EXCEPTIONAL FAMILIES

EXCEPTIONAL NEWS

THE GREATEST BENEFITS FOR REDUCING ANXIETY CAME WITH A SIMPLE MINDFULNESS PROGRAM INVOLVING SELF-RELAXATION TECHNIQUES.

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PARENT ANXIETY

Anxiety can take many forms, and affects many children, adults, and families of people who are autistic. Its symptoms can be severe or mild, and can manifest itself physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Anxiety is basically worry that never stops. Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disabilities experience higher levels of stress, illness and psychiatric problems. Although the stress and disease burden is exceptionally high on the parents, the practices and policies mainly serve the child identified with the disability. This means parents, “WE need to take care of US”!

A study of 143 mothers of children with disabilities was done, randomizing treatments using either Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (mindfulness practice) or Positive Adult Development (positive psychology practice). Well-trained, supervised peer leaders led 6 weeks of group treatments for 15 hours a week, with regular updates on their progress. The mothers studied had significantly elevated stress, nearly half were clinically depressed, and nearly half also had anxiety disorders.

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