

PARENTAL WELL-BEING GUIDE

Foundational ideas:

- In order to be a calm, robust leader for their families, parents need to prioritize time to care for their own physical and emotional needs.
- If parents can take a small action every day to support their own well-being, this supports the psychological and emotional health of the whole family.

Pay attention to physical and mental health basics:

- Adequate sleep
- Good nutrition
- Hydration
- Exercise
- Connection with people who care about you
- Time away from screens

Use cognitive strategies – develop a few scripts for managing difficult moments:

- “This is stressful but I’m not alone. I can tell _____ about it soon.”
- “I’m a good parent having a hard time. I’m going to try my best.”
- “I’m going to take 5 slow, deep breaths and then re-evaluate.”
- “This is an intense moment. I’m going to close my eyes and count to 20 so I can re-set.”

Consider which positive coping strategies worked best for you prior to getting your child’s diagnosis:

- Mindfulness, meditation, yoga
- Gardening
- Exercise – walk, dance, run, bike, swim
- Connect with friends or family – in person or virtually
- Read...or listen to an audiobook or podcast
- Take a bath or shower
- Play music or listen to a favorite play list
- Write, draw, or craft
- Therapy or parent coaching

Identify quick, 5-10 minute coping options that can serve as a daily well-being snack:

- Take a short walk
- Read one poem
- Play a quick game on your phone, such as Wordle
- Text a friend: “I have 5 minutes, are you free to say hi?”
- Use a meditation app (such as Calm, Headspace, or 10% Happier) for a 3 minute meditation
- Take a few slow, deep breaths
- Listen to one favorite song
- Ask a friend or family member to send you a silly meme or cartoon a couple of times a week (often a good job for a teen or young adult relative)

Mindfully manage your social media:

- Be thoughtful about the pros and cons of your social media diet
- Consider whether you generally feel better or worse after you spend time on a particular app
- Consider setting a daily time limit on some apps

