

ProActive Caring e-News



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ProActive Caring Trainer shares value of mindfulness methods learned in program

This fall, 53 parents and professionals completed a ProActive Caring Train-the-Trainer program that demonstrated how to teach mindfulness strategies to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, using task analysis and assistive technology.

One of the participants, Kara Georgi, M.Ed., a Family Education Specialist at Starbridge, a New York State Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC), recently spoke about the strategies learned.

"It is almost like I now have this little keychain attachment to go to when things are challenging or extra support is needed," she said. "They are a reminder of not only how to cope in the moment but stay better regulated overall."



The strategies, she explained, help slow life down and put problems into perspective. They help us see a hill is not a mountain and instill confidence that problems can be overcome.

Visuals, task analysis especially helpful

Georgi found the visuals used in the training to be especially useful, as well as the practice of task analysis, which breaks down tasks into concrete steps.

"It is helpful to have had the experience of doing the exercises in the training, and then having the steps and videos to refer to," she said, adding that the training has been as helpful for herself as it has been for the families and children she works with.

Mindfulness strategies she has used so far include focus on breathing, sensory grounding, gratitude, and changing your view. In the busyness of day-to-day life, she says, "all the strategies help to slow things just enough that we can reset, balance, and tackle the rest of the day in a better way."

Georgi said she would recommend the Train-the-Trainer course to any team or person working with families and kids.

"The intentionality and wealth of resources tied in to this make it easy to learn, apply, and use [the strategies] right away. Then we can all walk around with our mindfulness key chains changing the world for the better for families, children, and communities."

Program co-creator applauds team's work

"As a parent of a 15-year-old with autism, and one who has had ups and downs, especially in his teenage years, I can say that mindfulness is a tool that evolves with the changing situation we face. From the early days of shock and doubt after diagnosis, to the first interventions that help stabilize the family and ensure a transition into school, and then on to yearly IEP meetings and the routines of special education and home-life, mindfulness helps us stay in the present -- and not get pulled into the past or pushed into the future."

"It is a way of coping and managing stress, while also keeping awareness alive as to the opportunities for growth and collaboration that are so important to our children's happiness and to maintaining the caregiver's well-being. The ProActive Caring Program is very much solution focused and is geared to promoting self-compassion when we might otherwise be tough on ourselves."

"I salute the team that is helping to deliver the content of the ProActive Caring Program, and as important its spirit of self-empowerment and validation."



— Jeff Kahana



Happy Holidays ... and stay tuned!

We wish you the best for a happy holiday season! The ProActive Caring team will be reaching out to Train-the-Trainer participants in January, to offer support as mindfulness strategies continue to be introduced to individuals with developmental disabilities." With any questions, please reach out to Valerie Capalbo at vcapalbo.proactivecaring@gmail.com

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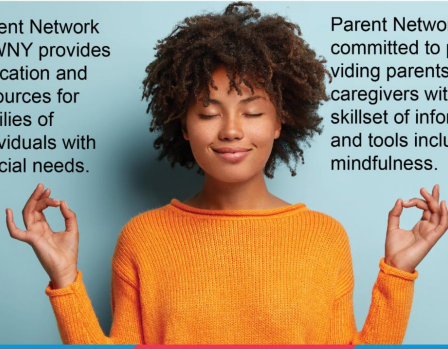
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Parent Network of WNY provides education and resources for families of individuals with special needs.



Parent Network is committed to providing parents and caregivers with a rich skillset of information and tools including mindfulness.

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