

Wellness and Self-Care for Autistic Teens

Presented by Stephanie Moeser, MSW, RSW.
Rediscovery Counselling
Peterborough, ON



AutismONTARIO
see the potential *voir le potentiel*

Agenda

Check in

Structure and routine

School work-pesky school work

Family

Morning and evening routines

Do's and Don'ts

Shifting Expectations of Ourselves

Mindfulness

Finding moments

Guided Visualization



Structure and Routine

Some tips:

- set an alarm for the same time every, check with parents or guardians
- try to eat at the same time every day-parents/guardians may have to remind you
- try to integrate exercise-this CAN be fun. Really it can.
- try to integrate relaxation-this can even be a slow pace video game
- consider connecting with others via text, phone or video (friends, family, teachers, support people)
 - treat these as intentions and not as hard and fast rules



Some basics (that we sometimes forget!)

Do:

- Drink water- sounds boring, I know. But is healthy and helps in so many ways
- Get sunlight (when you can) Or at least go outside and sit on your porch or balcony if you have either
- Open some windows (when you can)
- Remember to eat regularly- set alarms if you sometimes forget to eat, or ask someone to remind you
- Remember to take prescribed medication. Keep track of if it is running out to give you time to get more
- Time with pets, if you have some. We have fish. I've spent more time than I'd like to admit talking to them.
- Have a clear start to your day- more on the next slide
- Have a clear bed time routine-more on the next next slide



Morning routine

- Clear start to the day provides structure
- Quick---what day of the week it is? What month? (Joking, kind of)
- If its helpful, check a calendar or your phone so you know what day of the week it is
- Have breakfast
- Get changed into new clothes- I know, I know. Why bother? But it's important and I'll tell you why!
- Brush teeth/shower etc- I know, I know. Why bother? But it's important and I'll tell you why!
- Consider writing, typing or talking out some intentions for the day



Intentions for the day

Consider

- something fun
- something relaxing
- something creative
- something 'productive'
- some exercise
- some connection
- time for stimming (if needed)



Evening (before bed) routine

- Try to go to sleep around the same time every night and not too late!
- Think about or write down things you enjoyed/accomplished during the day
- Think about what you would like to do tomorrow
- Brush teeth/shower etc– I know I know, this was also part of the morning routine. You don't have to shower twice a day or every day.
- Change clothes- I know, again. Why? It helps give you a start and end to the day.
- Limit social media/videos/videogames before sleep (up to an hour before)
- Consider white noise or relaxing music/guided meditation
- Body scan- don't worry, I'll explain this!



Some basics (that we sometimes forget!)

Limit (or in moderation):

Caffeine

Pop

Junk Food– I said limit...not none.

Naps– I said limit...not none. Though for some, none may be important

Exposure to social media and news (especially in the evenings)



Mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally

Jon Kabat-Zinn



Take a moment.....

Jot down all the “should”, “shouldn’ts” or “should’ve’s” that have popped into your thoughts lately

For example “I should be doing more chores...” (I know, that ones not very likely)

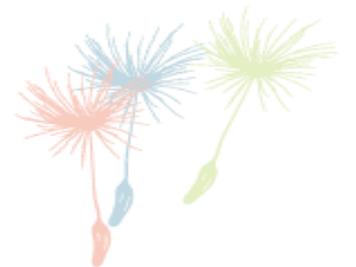


The pesky 'should'

Be aware of the second arrow

The first arrow is the actual situation that brings pain or discomfort. We have no choice or control over this

The second arrow is how we react. This could be the judgment we place upon ourselves for feeling a certain way or doing or not doing something. This is where we have some choice



Expectations

We are living through a global pandemic

There are a lot of unknowns and uncertainties

It's okay to feel worried and it's normal to feel worried

Dialectical thinking- using AND instead of BUT

Productivity versus wellness

Learning versus wellness

Therapy/programs versus wellness



Mindfulness

Something to think about:

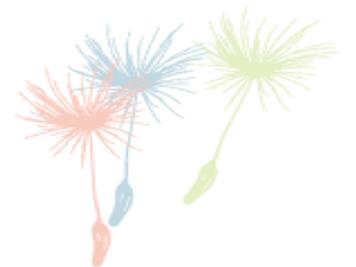
“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

Viktor E. Frankl



Take a moment.....

- Write down small ways that you can be gentle with yourself and shift some expectations



Grateful/Joy/Contentedness

In times of challenges, there are often also things that make us grateful or bring moments of joy

Start the day writing a few intentions or goals for the day

At the end of the day, consider writing down two or three moments or things that you are grateful for or that brought you a moment of joy

