How Mindfulness Helps Parents of Children with Disabilities

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Mindful Moment
Our vision:

Compassionate and mindful school communities throughout Michigan where all students thrive
Mindfulness Defined

“Paying attention…. On purpose…
In the present moment ….
With kindness”

--Jon Kabat-Zin, 1979
MC4ME’s been up to some good

Ongoing collaboration with 10 schools, agencies and organizations serving youth
Sponsor of national level trainings
Conduct mindfulness retreats
Facilitate movie events
Publish quarterly newsletter
Present at local, state and national level conferences
Sponsor peer gatherings to support educators using mindfulness in their teaching practice
Special Ed Emphasis

- Randomized clinical trial
- N=60, parents, SpEd personnel
- SMART curriculum, 11 sessions
- Stress, mental health, empathy, depression, anxiety, self-compassion, mindfulness, well-being
- Significant Changes, with medium effect sizes

M-SMART Parent Comments

• The biggest impact is definitely in my general calmness. I have been able to let go of many things and just breathe.

• I’m learning to lighten up & forgive myself when I make mistakes. I’ve also been a better parent as a result of meditation; much more patient and grounded.

• It has helped me gain perspective about my emotions and tone them done a lot with my son

• I’ve learned some “tools” to help me start to become aware of emotions & choices. Still a long way to go in being able to “control” reactions, etc. A good start but needs more time…
Different But Same

Some Key Principles:

1) Fundamental importance of mind-body work
2) Use of play and objects to provide concrete markers
3) Normalizing busy mind in the face of identified pathology
4) Increasing expressive communication to describe internal experience
5) Forgiveness/letting go
6) Your comfort with their BIG emotions allows softening
On the spot magic

Relax ......

Two handed heart breath 3 times

Ask yourself:

1) How does it feel in my body RIGHT NOW?
2) Can I let it be?
Increasing awareness

Importance of self-compassion for:

Our health
Happiness
Well being
Fostering good relationships
Self-Compassion

Three parts:
  Self-kindness
  Common humanity
  Mindfulness
Compassion Exercise

Compassion is your gift to yourself.