

5 best practices

for therapists working with autism spectrum parents

1. Screen For PTSD

Research has indicated the experience of receiving an autism diagnosis can be considered a traumatic event for the parent(s). In addition, caring for children who need constant supervision means their body is often on 'high alert'.

2. Educate About Grief

Parents of children with autism experience cyclical, nonfinite grief; This means the five stages of grief are re-experienced often and without closure. Helping them learn about this process can make life easier.

3. Encourage Self-Care

This is an area of scarcity for these parents. Sleep, exercise, healthy eating habits and downtime seem to all be at a minimum. Your encouragement can make a huge difference.

4. Help Them Plan Regular Breaks

Many states have medicaid waiver programs that provide respite free of charge. Encourage families to apply for these services so they can get regular breaks from care-taking.

5. Encourage Proper Medical Care

ASD parents have a higher incidence of substance abuse, depression, anxiety, thyroid disease and metabolic disorders. Encourage parents to receive regular medical care for themselves, and refer as necessary.

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