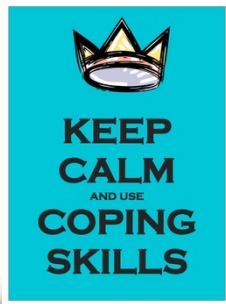




FIT 4 WORK * FIT 4 LIFE

Stay healthy, reduce stress, be safe



In this issue I want to focus on supporting you. I feel this is necessary as I hear the questions during our Zoom meetings such as “When can I see my friends again,” “Do people die from Covid?” And the simple statements of “I miss you.” The fact of the matter is whether you have IDD or not, everyone feels confusion, fear, and flat out uncertainty as to what daily routines will be like 6 months from now or even years from now. The one thing to keep in mind is that dwelling on the things we can not change will only make us more anxious. Instead let us focus on how we can enjoy our interests and stay active while finding supports that calm us.

Strategies to Support You through Uncertain Times

Everyone needs support from friends, family or caregivers during times of stress and uncertainty, such as now. Dealing with the sudden change in your routine, not seeing friends and the fear of contracting the virus are shared feelings no matter who you are. Being able to understand and talk about our feelings can be hard and cause us to feel anxious or depressed.

Try to focus on what you can control. Say to yourself “I can control what I am doing here and now” and take action. Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings by talking to a parent, caregiver, or friend. Make time for yourself by setting aside time each day to do something fun. Reconnect with the things you enjoy like a hobby or activity but maybe didn’t have time to do. Try to eat healthy and get enough sleep each night. Take a daily family walk or bike ride or do yoga. Give yourself forgiveness and try your best to not be hard on yourself. Limit your exposure to news coverage and social media especially if it upsets you. Keep a routine by sticking to a schedule even if you are home all day. Try to get up, eat and go to bed at your

1

STRESS LESS

2

EAT BETTER

3

LEARN SOMETHING
NEW

STRATEGIES TO GET THROUGH UNCERTAINTY



COPING SKILLS



Do you know what yours are?

HAVE A POPSICLE!



Make it yourself

7 STRATEGIES FOR CAREGIVERS TO OFFER SUPPORT



Support
understanding



Offer
opportunities
for expression



Prioritize
coping and
calming skills



Maintain
routines



Build new
routines



Foster
connections
(from a
distance)



Be aware of
changing
behaviors

normal time. This can help keep you calm and feel as close to normal as possible. Manage your anxiety by practicing coping skills. If you feel overwhelmed, step away and take a deep breath. Stay in touch virtually. Most important, keep your support network strong even if you are only able to call or text friends and family. Remember you can always connect with us at SJOG!

COPING SKILLS- DO YOU HAVE THEM? DO YOU NEED THEM?

Learning coping, self-management, and self-care skills is important during this time of uncertainty. Do you have strategies that you use when feeling anxious or scared? I like to use my coping skills toolbox when I'm feeling most anxious. And I'm not talking about a toolbox with hammers and wrenches! A coping strategy tool box is basically a container I fill with the things that bring me comfort.

Coping skills include things like rocking in a rocking chair, listening to music, deep breathing, watching a movie, exercising, or doing a favorite activity. If you do not have any coping or calming strategies as part of your routine, now is a good time to think about your needs.

What I am saying is that we all have things that make us feel better. But sometimes we need reminders when we are not feeling our best as to what works for us. Figuring out what these things are and putting these things together in one place can help us use our tools when we need them most and may not be able to think clear. Also, knowing what types of things bother us such as an activity, topic, or time of day is useful so that we can prepare for coping with that situation.

HOMEMADE POPSICLES



Need a healthy snack for those times you find yourself craving something sweet? Try homemade popsicles. Make them with fresh fruit and no-sugar-added juice. You'll avoid all the artificial sweeteners and colors that are found in store-bought versions. I like to make a strawberry banana smoothie at breakfast and then I pour the leftover smoothie into a bathroom cup with a popsicle stick and a dollop of plain greek yogurt. I pop it in the freezer and have the perfect pick me up snack for another day. Try it!

WHAT IS A COPING SKILLS TOOLBOX?

A collection of items that help to calm and balance emotions. When coping items are gathered together in one place, it's a lot easier to remember to use them rather than rely on negative behavior.

There are 6 different types of things to put in a coping skills toolbox.

1. Self-Soothing

Something to touch, hear, look at, taste, or smell

2. Distraction

Puzzle, coloring book, blocks, fidget cube

3. Opposite Action

Paper to write down good things about yourself, or pictures that make you laugh.

4. Emotional Awareness

Journal or art supplies to do something positive like write or draw

5. Mindfulness

Sensory toy, breathing chart, relaxation apps such as Calm, Headspace, Breathe2Relax, Virtual Hope Box, Pacifica, and RainRain

6. Crisis Plan

A plan for how to handle a melt down such as someone to call and their number



Taste:

- hard candy
- Gum
- Chocolates

Fidgets:

- balloons with play-dough in them
- Worry stone
- Bungee bracelets
- Textured fabric
- Bubble wrap
- Silly putty

Deep Breathing:

- Bubbles
- Party horns
- Pin wheel

Smell:

- Lotions
- Candles
- Essential oils
- Smelly markers

Sight:

- Pictures
- Calm down jars
- I-spy jars

Distractions:

- word finds
- Small puzzles
- Coloring pages
- List of things that don't fit in the bag (music, hugs, etc.)



VR ZOOM PROGRAMING

MONDAYS- Look for SMARTS coming soon!

TUESDAYS AT 1PM- FIT 4 LIFE WITH NURSE JOANNE

WEDNESDAYS at 11:30AM- SOFT SKILLS

THURSDAYS at 2pm- BINGO

FRIDAYS AT NOON- BR. TOM'S ZOOM PARTY

Join Nurse Joanne in
our next "Fit 4 Work"
online Webinar every
Tuesday at 1pm

Same link every week-

[https://zoom.us/j/
2679403090?](https://zoom.us/j/2679403090?pwd=MUh0bmVSVzlrMHdsMTR0eXIDY2pyZz09)
pwd=MUh0bmVSVzlrMHd
sMTR0eXIDY2pyZz09

Meeting ID: 267 940 3090
Password: FIT4WORK

Have a topic you want to
talk about? Send me an e-
mail or tell me during our
next Fit 4 Work!

Hello. My name is Joanne Mintzas and I am the Care Manager, RN for St. John of God. Consider me a resource if you need support in completing your annual paperwork, have a medical question, are seeking services with a health aspect, or just need to talk.

A little about me: I have a BS in Foods and Nutrition, a BS in Nursing, and a MS in management. I have previous experience as a dementia nurse, a mental health nurse, and I worked at ADS as a part time school nurse prior to taking on this role. I instituted the Fit 4 Work program here at SJOG where I provide weekly educational lessons regarding work place safety, ergonomics, health and nutrition, and stress

management for clients in the VR program. Look for my upcoming webinars and feel free to reach out to me with your comments or suggestions.

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St. John of God Community Services

