

## **Parent Child Journey**

*An Individualized Approach to Raising Your Challenging Child*

by Dan Shapiro, MD

### ***Second Mile: Time-in and Self-Care***

Why do time-in with your child?

- Get off the negative
- “Push off with the left-hand, pull near with the right”
- Relationship repair and maintenance
- Stress reduction

How to do time-in with your child: **“PIRCh”**

**Plan:**

- Select an appropriate physical space
- Get one-on-one
- Each child, each parent
- Dividing and peeling
- Starting and stopping
- Time-in is not just for parents

**Individualize:**

- Verbal attention
- Nonverbal attention
  - Facial expressions
  - Gestures
  - Touch
  - Music
  - Just being present
- Volume adjustment

**Relax**

**Child-led**

- Follow
- No questions, no commands, no teaching
- For the teenager

Self-acceptance: When parents confront the daily realities of having a challenging child, they go through different emotional phases. Rita Eichenstein (2015) describes five phases of adjustment. Similar to stages of grief, raising a child with developmental differences involves a kind of mourning:

1. Denial
2. Anger and blame
3. Bargaining and seeking solutions
4. The depression trap
5. Active Acceptance

Distorted (versus realistic) thinking:

- All or nothing
- Magnification or minimization
- Glass half-empty
- Emotional reasoning
- Jumping to conclusions
- Perfectionism, personalization, and self-labeling
- Shifting blame

Self-care:

- exercise, swim, walk, bike, dance
- read, write
- draw, paint, do other arts and crafts
- garden, hike, climb, kayak, canoe, boat, fish
- sing, play an instrument, listen to music
- cook or bake
- spend some time alone
- go to a favorite place
- relax with a movie or TV show
- practice yoga, mindfulness, meditation
- learn other relaxation techniques
- bath, shower, massage, spa
- eat healthy, but allow for a few special indulgences
- sleep well
- take a break from the phone, e-mails, and computers
- be careful about caffeine, alcohol, or other substance use
- ask for help from friends and family
- get respite care and babysitters for your children
- take a trip
- have a date night
- get physically close to those you love

- spend time with friends and family
- spend time with your dog or cat
- take a class, join an interest or activity group
- find a support group or friends who share similar challenges
- nurture positive connections with your school and work community
- be an advocate, activist, volunteer, or mentor
- practice rituals, celebrate holidays, go to religious services, pray
- see a mental health provider

### **Homework for the Second Mile**

1. Practice “time-in” with your child(ren):
  - a. Get a plan
  - b. Select an appropriate physical space
  - c. Get one-on-one
  - d. Get relaxed
  - e. Get into whatever your child wants to do
  - f. Give custom-designed, positive attention
  - g. No questions, no commands, no teaching
  - h. Each child, each adult
2. Practice self-acceptance and self-care:
  - a. What phase of emotional adjustment are you in?
    - i. Denial
    - ii. Anger
    - iii. Bargaining and seeking solutions
    - iv. Depression
    - v. Active acceptance
  - b. What are your most common distorted thoughts? How can you replace them with other thoughts that are more accurate and realistic?
  - c. Do something for yourself? Try to establish a regular self-care routine.
  - d. Ask for help.