When you think of the holidays you may think of the commercials on TV, where people are receiving the perfect gifts and families are sitting around tables laughing and smiling with an abundance of food. We understand this is not always the case. After paying your monthly bills there may not be enough money for the “perfect gift” or tables filled with food. This is something a lot of families experience. The holidays can be challenging and bring on a lot of pressure. Many experience anxiety with this amount of pressure. It is important to keep in mind that going through a rough patch is more common than one might think. If you are having a challenging time with purchasing toys for your children, you can request assistance by completing a toy application from Toys for Tots.

https://www.toysfortots.org/request_toys/apply-for-toys.aspx

Remember, there are places you can turn to in times when there is no money for the holidays. If you are in need of food assistance you can go to the Feeding Westchester website: https://feedingwestchester.org/find-help/agency-locator/

The holiday season is a time where many have conflicting feelings about being with friends and family. Some are hopeful to be invited to a gathering while others dread the invite. It is important to take care of your needs during the holiday season. If you are alone during the holidays, consider volunteering at your local nursing home where you and your children can brighten someone’s holiday: https://profiles.health.ny.gov/nursing_home/index#13/41.0851/-73.7786

Life can be challenging, especially when there are circumstances out of your control. While deciding how you want to spend your holidays, check in with yourself and ask, how does this make me feel? Your mental health should always come first.

*Tip*: Name the different feelings they know.

*Tip*: Teach how to state what they are feeling:

Ex: I didn’t win!

I am sad that I didn’t win the game.

Parent: I am going to give you a hug because you are feeling sad.

*Tip*: Practice labeling feelings

Ex: When they take my toy it makes me upset.

When she gossips about me, I feel hurt.

*Tip*: When your child is labeling a feeling just listen. Do not correct, debate, or dismiss what they are saying.

*BOOK DISCUSSION*

The book The Feels allows parents to work with their children on naming their feelings. This book can help you to start a conversation with your child and develop an emotional language with them. Your child may have difficulty labeling how they feel and would benefit from looking at a feelings chart. After labeling the emotion, encourage them to practice saying it. Remember, many children learn through parents’ example, take time to use emotional language with them: “When you put your toys away it makes me happy,” “Thank you for telling me how you are feeling, I am pleased.” Once they can label a feeling discuss how to cope with these feelings.

*FEELING WORDS LIST*
HOLIDAY CONCERNS

FAMILY GATHERINGS

According to many holiday songs this is the most wonderful time of the year, yet the thought of seeing family can make many feel like it’s a sad time of the year. Many experience stress and anxiety when being invited to a gathering where the abuser may be present. It is not uncommon for the family of someone who has been abused to feel fear, stress, and anxiety at the thought of the abuser being present at a gathering. You may even be shocked or feel disappointed that the family would consider inviting them to the gathering. Some families find the abuse taboo and rather not acknowledge it, or they may not be aware of the abuse. This can be another stressful situation for the survivor and their immediate family. No one should have to go through this, but it happens. Now you are faced with the decision of what to do next. Before making this decision it is important the survivor remembers, this is not their fault, and they are not to blame. When thinking it through, you should not allow family/ friends to guilt or bully you into attending something that makes you or your family uneasy. You have the right to feel whatever it is you are feeling. If someone makes you feel guilty about not attending, are they looking out for you? Take deep breaths; stress and anxiety can physically break our bodies down. Those who have been abused understand the effect of stress on the body. Lastly, you are in control over yourself and all matters pertaining to your family. It is completely your choice to not attend a gathering where the abuser will be.

Remember taking care of your mental health is especially important!

SELF CARE

ME TIME

What can you do to set aside some me time for your own self-care? You do not need more time in your day, you just need to use your time to the fullest. The shower is a good space for some self-care.

1. During your shower you can play some relaxing music. This will allow you to be distracted from your thoughts and give your mind a rest. https://youtu.be/8TdqtS9NrSc

2. During your shower you can work on deep breathing. This can reduce stress. You may also do these exercises with your children. https://youtu.be/ljb8il8T7c4?hl=en

3. During your shower sing aloud to your favorite song. This should bring you back to a happy time in your life.

Things to remember for the month of December:
- Get plenty of rest
- Do Not purchase gifts that will put you in debt
- You can say No to stressful invitations
- Let your present be you being present in the moment
- Family is who you want to be around
- Choose yourself again and again

Using affirmations can reduce stress and increase confidence.

DAILY AFFIRMATIONS TO YOURSELF:
I AM DOING MY BEST

HOW TO SAY, NO!

Why do so many adults and children struggle with saying no? Most 2-year-olds have no difficulty shouting, NO! As we grow older, we become more aware of others and their feelings and are less likely to say no. Saying no to someone can be seen as being rude and can cause fear of how it will be perceived. A decision can be made after asking, what do I feel about this request? Is it better for my mental health to say no? It is important to have a conversation with your children about being able to say no to things that make them uncomfortable. Many children fear the backlash of saying no to a friend or family member. It is okay to discuss benefits of saying no and putting the needs of ourselves before others. Teaching children that it is okay to say no allows them to create boundaries and will keep others from crossing them. You may want to provide examples of saying no along with something positive. “Thank you for the invite, but I cannot go.” Relatives are the people they love dearly, and children can feel trapped in something they do not want. Work with your child on having them vocalize what is making them uncomfortable. You can help your child build the language and confidence to say no by having these types of conversations. Provide praise to your child for saying, NO!

FREE Webinars

REGISTER FOR:

Child Abuse: It’s Everybody’s Problem
Date 12/19/2022 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm https://casadelosninos.org/classes/child-abuse-its-everybodys-problem-12/

Nutrition 101 Webinar: Increase Your Metabolism and Burn Fat Naturally
Date Monday, January 2, 2023 · 7:00 pm https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nutrition-101-webinar-increase-your-metabolism-and-burn-fat-naturally-tickets-75905903601?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

Language to Build Children’s Self-Esteem
Date Mon, January 16, 2023, 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM https://www.eventbrite.com/e/powerful-words-language-to-build-childrens-self-esteem-free-webinar-tickets-474162361387?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

Disclaimer: Our primary purpose is to provide you with information and not meant to treat or cure trauma. This information is not meant as a SUBSTITUTE for therapy. It is recommended that you seek the advice of a therapist/health care professional as needed

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