



## GRANDPARENTS RAISING AND NURTURING DEPENDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

VOLUME 9/ISSUE 9 April 2016

### MARCH SUPPORT GROUP

**Plan to attend:**  
**Tuesday, April 19th**  
**10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

**Helene Mills Senior  
Multipurpose Center  
Activities Room  
515 John Wesley Dobbs Ave  
Atlanta GA 30312**

#### **Take Time For YOU!**

**Being a parent is stressful  
and we often forget to take  
care of ourselves. Join us  
this month as we talk about  
self-care tips. We will have a  
yoga instructor lead us in  
some simple exercises for  
stress relief and another  
speaker will guide us in  
learning simple meditation.**

#### **Bus Route to Helene Mills:**

From 5 POINTS STATION, take  
#113 Auburn Ave. (get off at the  
Center) or King Memorial #99  
/North Avenue Station

#### **By Car from I-20 W**

- 1) Take the Boulevard exit
- 2) Right onto Boulevard
- 3) Right onto John Wesley  
Dobbs Avenue
- 4) The Helene Mills Center will  
be the second building on the  
right

**Upcoming Support  
Group Meetings:**

**May 17, 2016**

**No meeting in June/July**

## APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

join us in  
CELEBRATION



awareness

action

acceptance

inclusion

appreciation

### *What is Autism?*

- Autism is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3
- Autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

### *Did you know ...*

- Autism now affects 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys
- Autism prevalence figures are growing
- Autism is one of the fastest-growing developmental disorders in the U.S.
- Autism costs a family \$60,000 a year on average
- Boys are nearly five times more likely than girls to have autism
- There is no medical detection or cure for autism

### **National Institutes of Health Funds Allocation**

- Total 2012 NIH budget: \$30.86 billion
- Of this, only \$169 million goes directly to autism research. This represents 0.55% of total NIH funding.

\*\* info reprinted from [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

## HEALTH CORNER

### Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief--article adapted from [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)

For many of us, relaxation means zoning out in front of the TV at the end of a stressful day. But this does little to reduce the damaging effects of stress. To effectively combat stress, we need to activate the body's natural relaxation response.

You can do this by practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, rhythmic exercise, and yoga. Fitting these activities into your life can help reduce everyday stress and boost your energy and mood.



### The relaxation response: Bringing your nervous system back into balance

When stress overwhelms your nervous system your body is flooded with chemicals that prepare you for "fight or flight." While the stress response can be lifesaving in emergency situations where you need to act quickly, it wears your body down when constantly activated by the stresses of everyday life.

No one can avoid all stress, but you can counteract it by learning how to produce the *relaxation response*, a state of deep rest that is the polar opposite of the stress response. The relaxation response puts the brakes on stress and brings your body and mind back into a state of equilibrium.

When the relaxation response is activated:

- Your heart rate decreases
- Breathing becomes slower and deeper
- Blood pressure drops or stabilizes
- Your muscles relax
- Your body begins to heal

In addition to its calming physical effects, the relaxation response also increases energy and focus, combats illness, relieves aches and pains, heightens problem-solving abilities, and boosts motivation and productivity. Best of all, anyone can reap these benefits with regular practice.

### Producing the relaxation response

A variety of different relaxation techniques can help you bring your nervous system back into balance by producing the relaxation response. The relaxation response is not lying on the couch or sleeping but a mentally active process that leaves the body relaxed, calm, and focused.

Learning the basics of relaxation techniques isn't difficult, but it does take practice. Most stress experts recommend setting aside at least 10 to 20 minutes a day for your relaxation practice. If you'd like to get even more stress relief, aim for 30 minutes to an hour. If that sounds like a daunting commitment, remember that many of these techniques can be incorporated into your existing daily schedule—practiced at your desk over lunch or on the bus during your morning commute. Finding the relaxation technique that's best for you

There is no single relaxation technique that is best for everyone. When choosing a relaxation technique, consider your specific needs, preferences, fitness, and the way you tend to react to stress. The right relaxation technique is the one that resonates with you, fits your lifestyle, and is able to focus your mind and interrupt your everyday

thoughts in order to elicit the relaxation response. In many cases, you may find that alternating or combining different techniques will keep you motivated and provide you with the best results.

How you react to stress may influence the relaxation technique that works best for you:

- **The “fight” response.** If you tend to become angry, agitated, or keyed up under stress, you will respond best to stress relief activities that quiet you down, such as meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, or guided imagery.
- **The “flight” response.** If you tend to become depressed, withdrawn, or spaced out under stress, you will respond best to stress relief activities that are stimulating and energize your nervous system, such as rhythmic exercise, massage, mindfulness, or power yoga.
- **The immobilization response.** If you’ve experienced some type of trauma and tend to “freeze” or become “stuck” under stress, your challenge is to first rouse your nervous system to a fight or flight response (above) so you can employ the applicable stress relief techniques. To do this, choose physical activity that engages both your arms and legs, such as running, dancing, or tai chi, and perform it mindfully, focusing on the sensations in your limbs as you move.



### **Making relaxation techniques a part of your life**

The best way to start and maintain a relaxation practice is to incorporate it into your daily routine. While it can be tough to find the time in a busy schedule, many of the techniques can be practiced while you’re doing other things. You can meditate while commuting to work on a bus or train, for example, or waiting for an appointment. Try deep breathing while you’re doing housework or mowing the lawn. Mindfulness walking can be done while exercising your dog, walking to your car, or climbing the stairs at work. Once you’ve learned techniques such as tai chi, you can practice them in your office or in the park at lunchtime.

### **Other tips for making relaxation techniques part of your life**

- **If possible, schedule a set time to practice each day.** Set aside one or two periods each day. You may find that it’s easier to stick with your practice if you do it first thing in the morning, before other tasks and responsibilities get in the way.
- **If you exercise, improve the relaxation benefits by adopting mindfulness.** Instead of zoning out or staring at a TV as you exercise, try focusing your attention on your body. If you’re resistance training, for example, focus on coordinating your breathing with your movements and pay attention to how your body feels as you raise and lower the weights.
- **Avoid practicing when you’re sleepy.** These techniques can relax you so much that they can make you very sleepy, especially if it’s close to bedtime. You will get the most benefit if you practice when you’re fully awake and alert. Do not practice after eating a heavy meal or while using drugs, tobacco, or alcohol.
- **Expect ups and downs.** Don’t be discouraged if you skip a few days or even a few weeks. It happens. Just get started again and slowly build up to your old momentum.

### **7 Types of Relaxation Techniques**

1. Breathing meditation
2. Rhythmic Movement
3. Progressive muscle relaxation
4. Body scan meditation
5. Mindful meditation
6. Visualization meditation
7. Yoga and tai chi

### **Need Help? Contact Us**

#### **ISDD OFFICE**

**750 Hammond Drive, Bldg. 1,  
Suite 100**

**Atlanta, GA 30328**

**404-303-5126 office**

**404-600-3332 Rainie Jueschke, ED**

**404-310-8129 Laura Wells cell**

[lauraw@isdd-home.org](mailto:lauraw@isdd-home.org)

**We will explore these 7 techniques at our April 19th support group and in the next newsletter!**

## RESOURCE CORNER

### **Relative Caregiver Legal Hotline:**

For questions regarding custody, adoption, power of attorney, public benefits, educational rights and more.

**1-888-257-9519**

**Monday through Thursday 9:00am to 2:00pm**

### **The Aging and Disability Resource Connection**

For questions and information for seniors regarding:

Housing options

Caregiver resources

In-home services

Emergency financial assistance

Home delivered meals

Transportation

Health and Wellness programs

**404-463-3333 or [www.agewiseconnection.com](http://www.agewiseconnection.com)**

**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

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### **PROJECT GRANDD**

A program of Innovative Solutions  
for Disadvantage & Disability

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Building 1, Suite 100

Atlanta, GA 30328