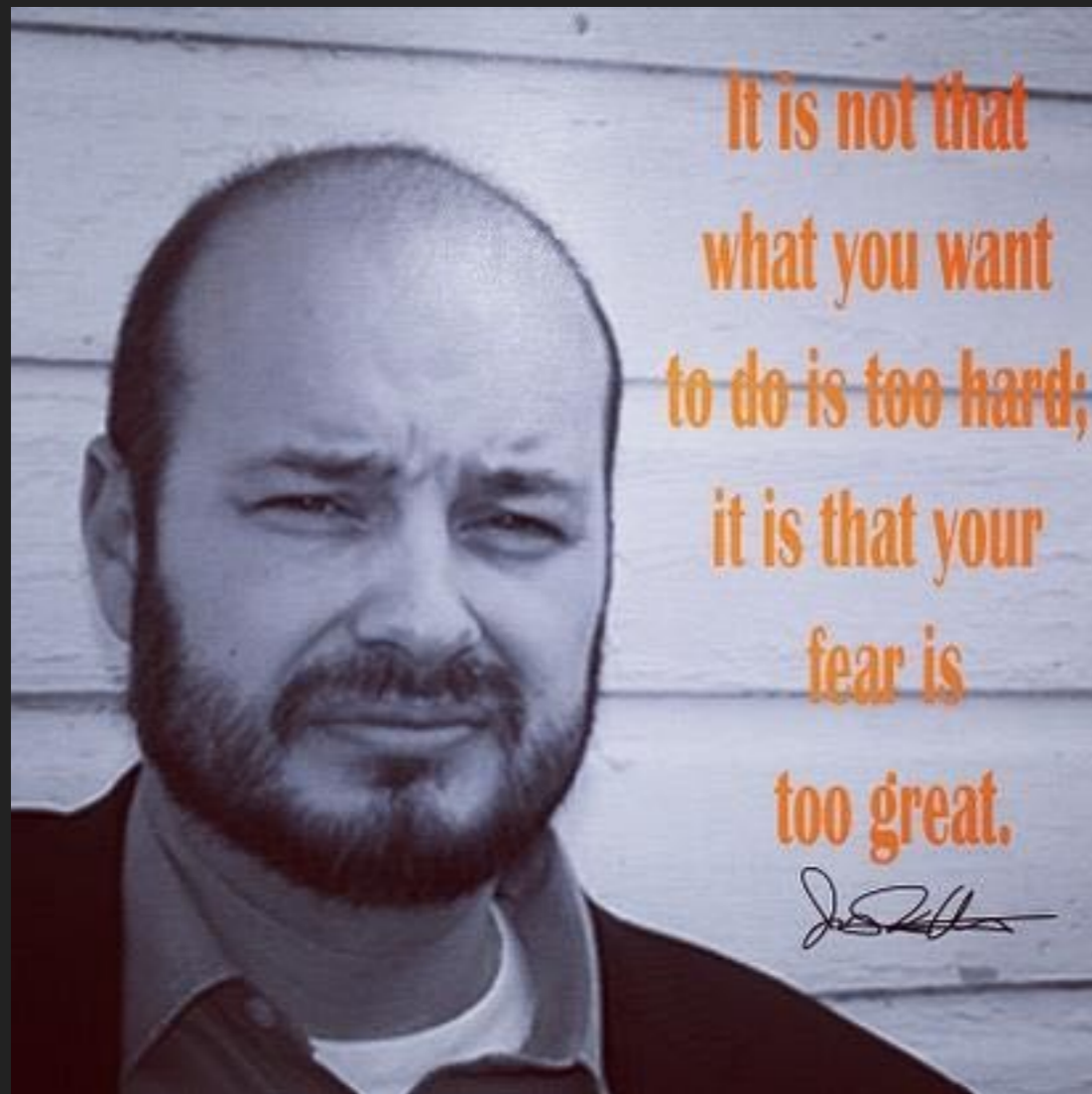


COACH TO WELLNESS

A WELLNESS GUIDE FOR FAMILIES RAISING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM



JOSH COBBS

**MA, HUMAN SERVICE
COUNSELING:
LIFE COACHING**

BIO

Josh Cobbs is a parent of a 18-year old son with autism. He has spent over a decade advocating for equitable services for individuals with autism. Josh twice provided testimony to the United States Senate on access to care and the efficacy of remote ABA treatment. He has worked with post-secondary institutions on how to set up transitional education and work programs for people with autism and intellectual disabilities. Cobbs holds a master's degree in human service counseling with a focus in life coaching. Josh provides a voice to parents in his podcast "Postcards From The Run" that has been downloaded in 17 countries and 36 states. Cobbs also founded The Pier Center for Autism in Sioux City, Iowa, helping spearhead ABA service delivery for families in Northwest Iowa. He was the driving force for the development of legislation to establish the Iowa Autism Council, serving as the inaugural chairperson. Cobbs most recently began Joyency a company empowering people through coaching, activity, and wellness.



MY COACHING APPROACH

- ▶ *“As a coach, I believe that you have the solutions inherently within you. Coaches will provide guidance for your dreams but you must provide the energy, honesty and passion. Coaching is not a drop off service, don’t expect to drop off your dreams and have a coach provide all the answers. Remember, coaches can’t want your success more than you. Collaboration is key for you to reach your expanded horizons. “You” have the power and ability to build your life”.- Josh Cobbs*

TAKEAWAYS...

- ▶ Identify parent stressors
- ▶ Identify 1 of the 6 stages of change
- ▶ Identify one tool that could help parents with stress



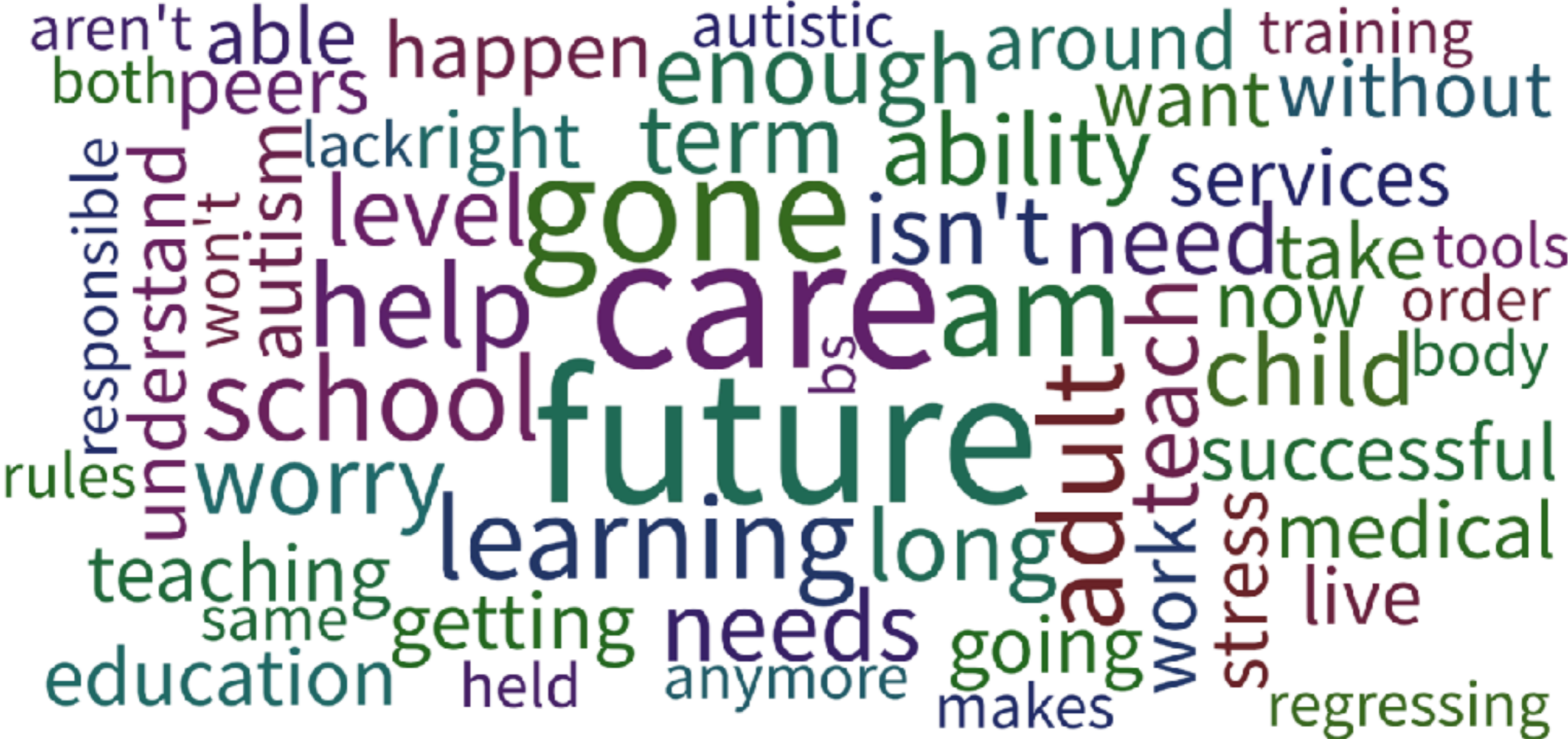
WHAT FAMILIES ARE DEALING WITH – STRESS

- ▶ Mothers of Children With Autism Have Higher Parental Stress, Psychological Distress
 - ▶ 73 mothers studied
 - ▶ 51 with autism
 - ▶ 22 developmental delays



WHAT ARE PARENTS SAYING? DATA COLLECTED ONLINE VIA JOSH COBBS (26 PARTICIPANTS)

As a parent of a child with autism I stress about?



STRESS DATA

- ▶ I worry about my health and wellness
 - ▶ 79% yes
- ▶ As a parent/caregiver of a child with autism I get quality sleep. (7-9 hours per 24 hours)
 - ▶ 0 days per week (20%), 2 days per week (27%), 3 days per week (13%), 5 days per week (27%)
- ▶ How many times per week is your sleep interrupted?
 - ▶ 2 (20%), 3 (20%), 5 (20%), 7 (20%)

STRESS DATA

- ▶ How many times a month do you feel stressed out?
 - ▶ 0-5 (27%), 6-15% (33%), 16-20 (20%), 20 or more (20%)
- ▶ How often do you and your spouse/partner go out without children?
 - ▶ Anniversaries and birthdays only (50%)
- ▶ If you haven't went out in the last 6 months without children what has prevented you?
 - ▶ Childcare (58%)

STRESS DATA

- ▶ How often do you go out with your friends?
 - ▶ A few times per month (43%), Once per year (50%)
- ▶ If you haven't went out in the last 6 months without children with your friends what has prevented you?
 - ▶ Childcare (45%) ,Disconnected no social friends outside of autism (36%)
- ▶ On a scale of 1 -10 how comfortable do you feel asking for help (0 being you will never ask for help)?
 - ▶ 2 (29%), 3 (21%), 5 (21%)

STRESS DATA

- ▶ I have enough time to exercise for 30 mins 5 times per week.
 - ▶ Yes (29%), No (36%), Most of the time (21%), Seriously you are asking me this question (14%)
- ▶ I exercise 30 mins 5 times per week.
 - ▶ No (69%)
- ▶ Generally do you feel supported by your community?
 - ▶ No and unsure (29%, Unsure 21%), most of the time (50%)
- ▶ If the hospital, clinic, or school my child offered coaching classes on wellness I would attend.
 - ▶ Yes (46%), No (23%), Maybe (31%)

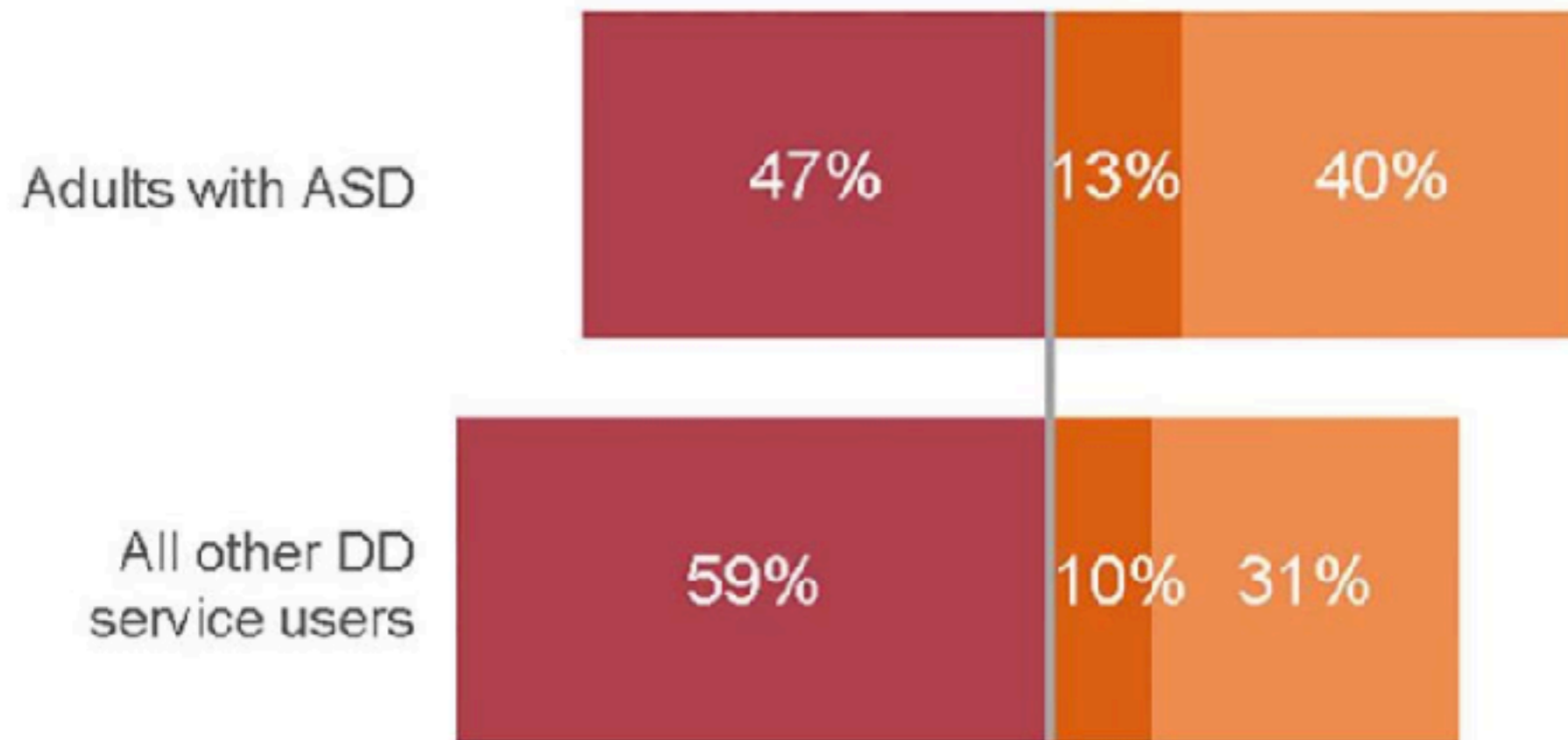
ADDITIONAL STRESSORS

- ▶ IEP Meetings
- ▶ Insurance Denials
- ▶ Guilt/Shame
- ▶ Financial
- ▶ Health of family
 - ▶ Siblings
 - ▶ Parent relationships
- ▶ Transitions
- ▶ Death/Superhero Mentality
- ▶ Long Term Care (Guardianship)
- ▶ Professional misconceptions - "This family is trouble".
- ▶ Therapy burnout /failure

Adults with ASD were more likely to have a guardian than other DD service users.

Legal or court appointed guardian

■ No ■ Yes, limited guardianship ■ Yes, full guardianship



Source: NCI Adult Consumer Survey 2014-15

Autism Life Course Outcomes Research

1 hr · 🌐

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Adults with autism were more likely to have a guardian than other developmental disability service users. [#autismindicators](#)

drexel.edu/autismoutcomes/autismindicators2017

HOW DOES BURNOUT IMPACT SYSTEMS OF CARE

- ▶ Disengagement
- ▶ Hostility
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ US v. Them, How The Court of Winning Hurts Progress

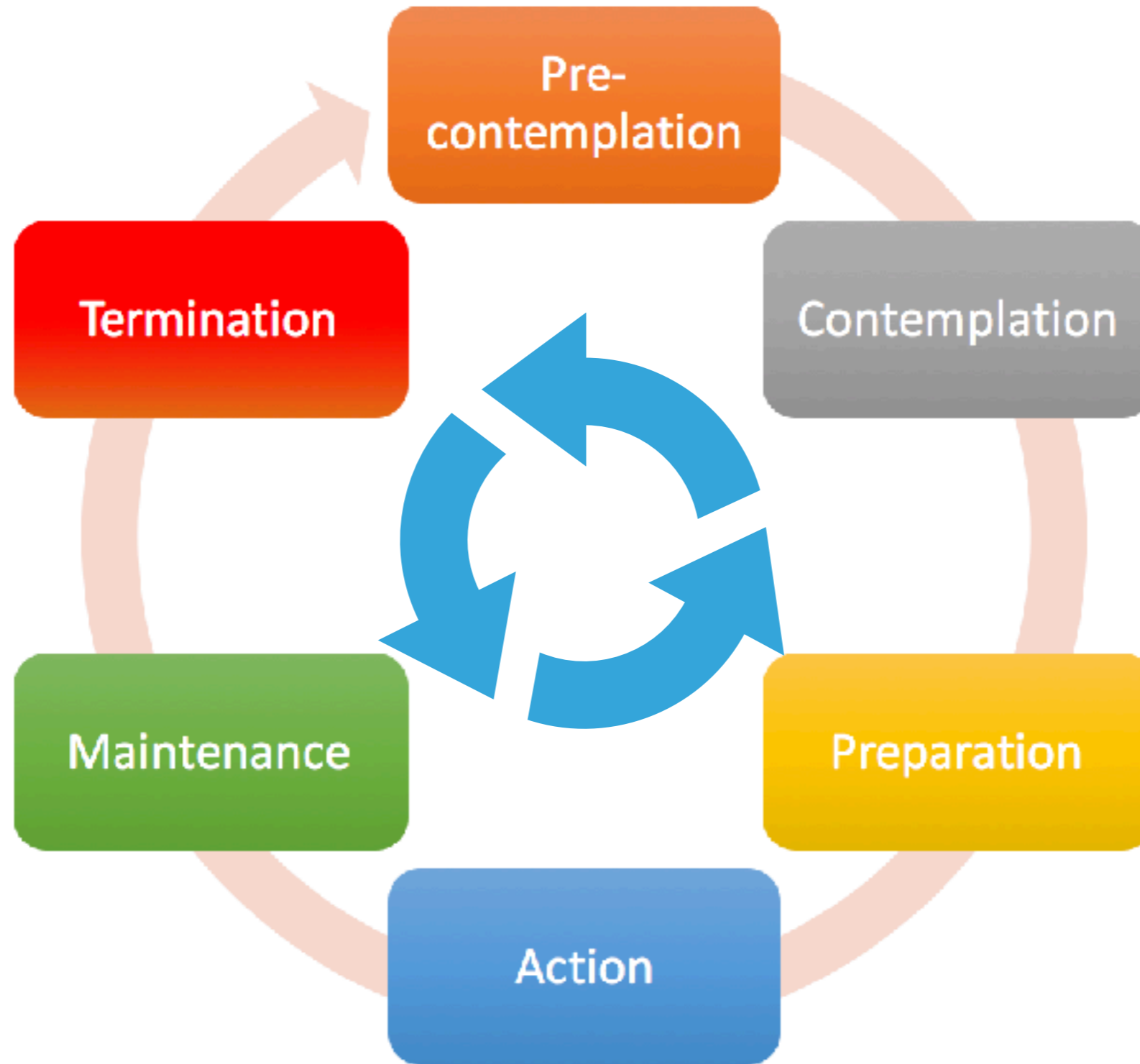
HOW TO HELP



BUILDING COLLABORATION AND A SYSTEM THAT WORKS

- ▶ Are they ready? Stages of change.
- ▶ Wellness Wheel
- ▶ Communication
 - ▶ Things that are NOT helpful
 - ▶ Question for understanding
- ▶ Goals
- ▶ Invest in your wellness portfolio

Stages of change



Stages of change adapted from (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992)

HOW YOU ROLLING?

WELLNESS WHEEL OVERVIEW

- ▶ What does your wellness portfolio look like?
- ▶ What goes into it?
- ▶ How to improve it and why it matters?



COMMUNICATION

HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

- ▶ Understand what parents might need from you. Parents might need.
 - ▶ Referral services
 - ▶ Understanding
 - ▶ Evidence
 - ▶ How do I tell my friends and family?
- ▶ Leave the US v. Them language behind

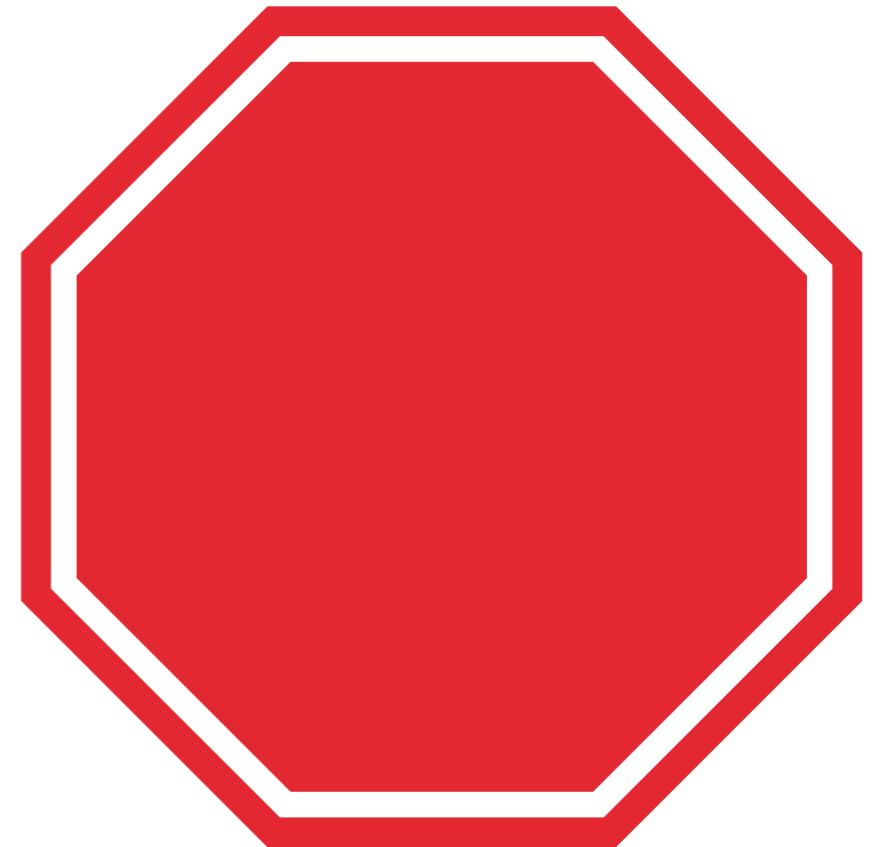


**SAYING SOMETHING LOUD DOES'NT MAKE YOU RIGHT
- IT MAKES YOU LOUD**

#joyency #communicationmatters

THINGS THAT ARE NOT HELPFUL

- ▶ Sending every “helpful” article, therapy, or trick you might know. It usually starts off like this “Have you tried XYZ”
- ▶ Misplaced compassion - Our children aren’t dead, a burden to us - they are different. “I am so sorry they have autism” Doesn’t help. Asking “How I can help” actually helps.
- ▶ Don’t say this “I know exactly what you are going through” Unless you do you DON’T. I have a generalized sense of families and their pain and joy but their journey is their journey.
- ▶ Don’t say if you need anything let me know. **UNLESS** you really mean it, set boundaries.
- ▶ Telling us all the things our children can’t do. Do you really want to be the person who limits potential? This is not the same as being honest.
- ▶ Comparing suffering



BIG QUESTIONS

- ▶ Some of my favorite questions to ask parents and reframe perspectives
 - ▶ What is the best that could happen?
 - ▶ Where are you out of integrity?
 - ▶ What is the first step you could take right now today?
 - ▶ What is your desired outcome?
 - ▶ How do you envision the end result?
 - ▶ What is your definition of success?
 - ▶ On a scale of 1 -10 how important is this idea?
 - ▶ If you had unlimited resources, how would this impact your goals/dreams?

GOALS PART 1 – SMART

Specific	You need to make sure you can describe what you are measuring in detail. As an example, if you want to increase your knowledge on a subject how will you do that? “I will read three books on purple penguins.”
Measurable	How will you know you are successful? What does your definition of success look like? If you read two books on purple penguins are is that success?
Actionable	Your goals must be something that propel you to act. Something you will REALLY do. If you don't like purple penguins the chances of you reading three books per month are not good.
Realistic	Should be something that is possible. If there are no books on purple penguins you are not going to be successful in reading three books on purple penguins.
Timed	Provide timeframes for goal completion. How long do you have to read three books on purple penguins? If you don't provide timeframes it allows goals to slip to lists.

GOALS PART 2 – FSMART

F	Flexible
Specific	You need to make sure you can describe what you are measuring in detail. As an example, if you want to increase your knowledge on a subject how will you do that? “I will read three books on purple penguins.”
Measurable	How will you know you are successful? What does your definition of success look like? If you read two books on purple penguins are is that success?
Actionable	Your goals must be something that propel you to act. Something you will REALLY do. If you don't like purple penguins the chances of you reading three books per month are not good.
Realistic	Should be something that is actually possible. If there are no books on purple penguins you are not going to be successful in reading three books on purple penguins.
Timed	Provide timeframes for goal completion. How long do you have to read three books on purple penguins? If you don't provide timeframes it allows goals to slip to lists.

INVEST IN YOUR WELLNESS PORTFOLIO



- ▶ Exercise/Nutrition
- ▶ Breathing/Meditation
- ▶ Mindset/Mindshift
- ▶ Being present
- ▶ Build a respite plan
- ▶ Journaling
- ▶ TV