

# Self Care and Kinship Caregivers

Presenter: Dr. Monique A. Lilakos, DSW, LCSW

Higher Purpose Coaching and Mentoring, LLC

[Higherpurposecoachmentor@gmail.com](mailto:Higherpurposecoachmentor@gmail.com)

Telephone: 914-424-8657

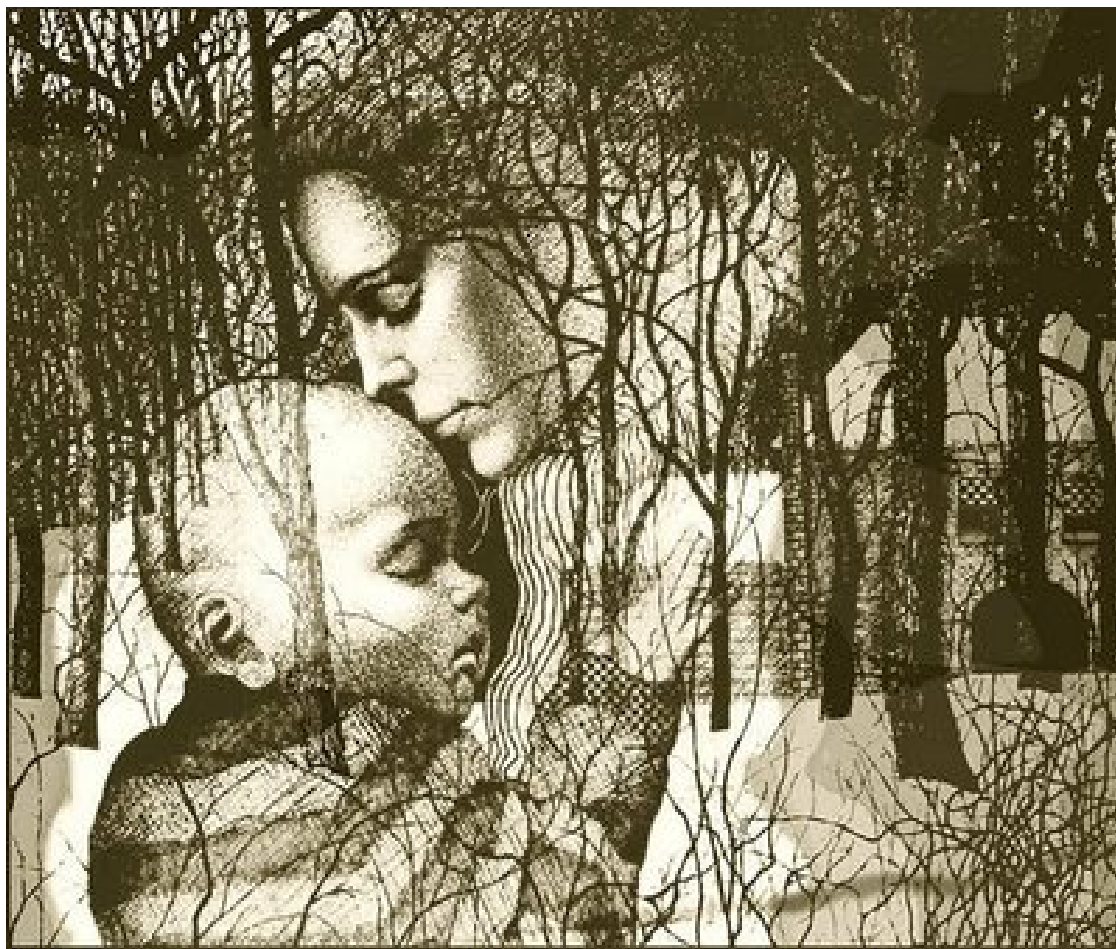
# Self-Care Introductions

- ▶ Who am I
- ▶ Why am I conducting/attending a self-care presentation
- ▶ What would I like to get out of this presentation

# Self-Care Goals

## Goals

- ▶ Provide information for kinship caregivers
- ▶ To help increase and enhance awareness on self-care
- ▶ Identify the benefits of self-care and self-regulation for communicating and problem solving with school and other community partners
- ▶ Provide examples on different types of self-care
- ▶ Provide a platform for kinship caregivers to connect



# Kinship Caregivers

- ▶ There are a growing number of kinship caregivers raising children from family members and friends in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), 4% of all kids, more than 2.65 million children are in kinship care in the U.S. These caregivers may be relatives such as, grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, godparents and/or close friends who are raising kids when their parents cannot care for them.

# Kinship Caregivers

- ▶ Kinship caregivers may have significant challenges raising children, such as, children's attachment issues, physical and mental disabilities, financial challenges, stress, education, special needs and feelings of loss due to issues related to the biological parents.
- ▶ Moreover, kinship caregivers may have challenges accessing community supports for themselves and the children they are raising (mental health services, school support, community, financial supports, medical services, etc.).

# Kinship Caregivers and Children with Special Needs

- ▶ If a child has special needs, kinship caregiver's may be juggling appointments with mental health therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists, psychiatrists, ophthalmologists, allergists, and asthma specialists.
- ▶ Ongoing appointments and emergencies can keep caregivers so busy that attending to their own feelings and needs may be put on hold (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020).



@lauraheartlines



# Kinship Caregivers and Self-Care

- ▶ Self-care, is crucial for kinship caregivers. The physical and emotional toll of caring for children, particularly children who may have experienced trauma can be overwhelming.
- ▶ Additionally, the blame that children can project onto their caregiver because they are hurt by their situation may be draining for kinship caregiver's. Children may express feelings of loss, hurt, anger and despair.

# Self-Care and Kinship Caregivers

- ▶ Kinship caregivers are often challenged with trying to understand the complexities of raising a child that has been displaced from their parent
- ▶ They are challenged with considering their child's unique needs and managing their own lives.

# Barriers to Self-Care

- ▶ “Take care of yourself!”—has become so worn out that, for many, it has lost all meaning. When someone casually tells a caregiver to take care of themselves, the caregiver may feel frustrated and angry.
- ▶ It’s easy to say. It’s not easy to do.
- ▶ Many kinship caregivers are natural caregivers. They have partners, children, jobs and aging parents who all require care and attention. Most days, the amount of energy they devote to others’ needs far exceeds any energy directed to their well-being (NACAC, 2005).

# Barriers to Self-Care

- ▶ Many kinship caregivers really want to be there for their families. They may be holding down a full-time job and want to remember birthdays. They may want to volunteer at their child's school. They may want to deliver a meal to a sick friend, help-out at church, and serve on task forces that address children's needs. So, they work longer and try harder to meet the needs of their families'.
- ▶ Many kinship caregivers simply do not know what would help them. They know something is missing and can't put their finger on what might make them feel better. Additionally, too many kinship caregivers believe they somehow shouldn't need support.

# Taking Care of You First



- ▶ Should the cabin lose pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the overhead area. Please place the mask over your own mouth and nose before assisting others.

# The Road to Good Self-Care

- ▶ Research shows that in order to overcome social, mental, and emotional barriers to self-care, Kinship caregivers must first come to understand the importance of taking care of themselves
- ▶ Caregivers must:
  - ▶ build self-care into their daily routine
  - ▶ believe that they are worth taking care of
  - ▶ believe that happiness and well-being are essential for good parenting.

# Areas of Self-Care and Examples of Self-Care



- ▶ Talk to someone (friend, therapist, other)
- ▶ Journal/gratitude list
- ▶ Meditate (calm, pray.com, sleep sounds, etc.)
- ▶ Take a bath/shower
- ▶ Get a massage/or massager
- ▶ Engage in positive self talk/don't compare your life
- ▶ Breathe/alone time
- ▶ Exercise/run/walk/weights
- ▶ Church/Spiritual Community
- ▶ Support group
- ▶ Sleep and eat healthy
- ▶ Ask for help! Respite
- ▶ Cry

# Guided Meditation



BODY  
SCAN



# Questions

Higher Purpose Coaching and Mentoring LLC

[Higherpurposecoachmentor](mailto:Higherpurposecoachmentor@gmail.com)

[@gmail.com](mailto:Higherpurposecoachmentor@gmail.com)

Dr. Monique Lilakos, DSW, LCSW 914-424-8657



# References

- ▶ Al-farsi, CY.M., Waly, M. I., Al-sharbati, M.M., Al-shafae, M., et. al (2013). Variation in Socio-Economic Burden for Caring of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Oman; Caregiver Perspectives. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 43(5) 1214-21.
- ▶ Annie E. Casey Foundation (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.aecf.org/search/?q=grandparent+caregivers>
- ▶ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012). *Stepping up for kids: What government and communities should do to support kinship families*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.aecf.org/resources/stepping-up-for-kids/>
- ▶ Bowlby, J. (1988). A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development. Basic Books: New York.
- ▶ Bowlby, J. (1951). Maternal care and mental health. *World Health Organization Monograph* (Serial No. 2).
- ▶ Bowlby, J. (1979). *The making and breaking of affectional bonds*. London: Tavistock.

# References

- ▶ North American Council on Adoption in Children. (2021). Retrieved from: <https://www.nacac.org/resource/self-carriers-adoptive-parents/>.
- ▶ U.S. Census.gov (2014). Retrieved January 24, 2015, from, <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p20-576.pdf>