

The Self Care Project

**Being a special parent
&
parenting ‘care-fully’.**

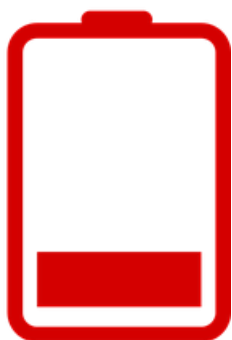




The central focus of a special parent's life is often the child.

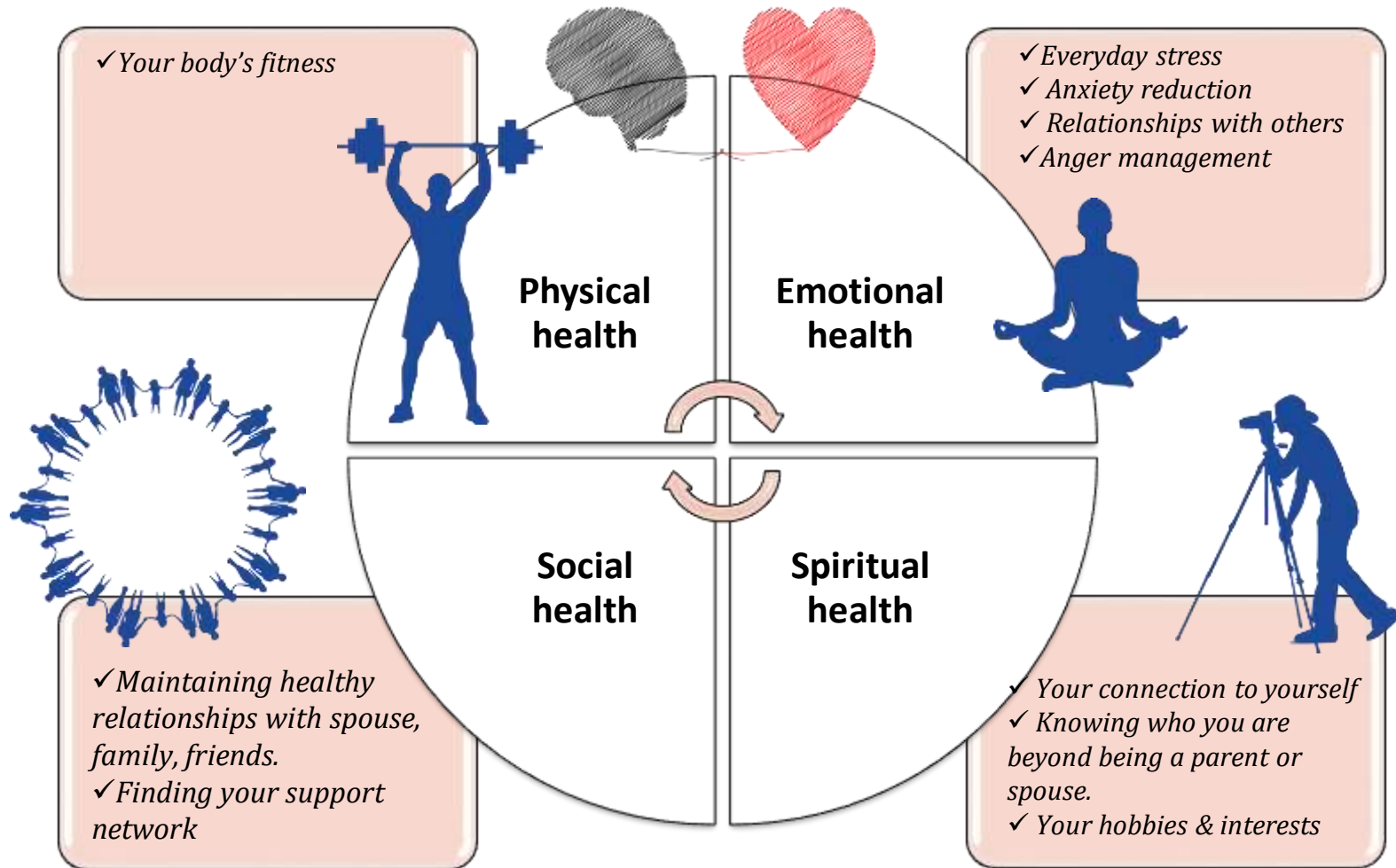
The severity of the child's disability often determines the extent of **dependency** the child has on their parent.

If you want to take care of your child, you also must take care of yourself.



You will never let this happen to your phone. Don't let this happen to you either, because **self-care** is also **mandatory** & should be considered a **priority** – for you!

We always think personal health only refers to an individual's physical health. But, health has many dimensions -





Physical Health

✓ *Your body fitness levels*



*Often, due to **rigid schedules** & **lack of time**, caregivers are unable to focus on their physical health as much as they would like to.*

Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your physical health

- ❖ Try & sleep everyday for a minimum of **7-8** hours.
- ❖ **30 minutes** of exercise a week can take you a long way & you'd be surprised how it can uplift your mood too.
- ❖ Set up an **exercise routine** with a friend or family member to motivate one another.
- ❖ Take rest when you have had long days, **do not do more than you can** on days you feel tired - *Know your limits.*





Emotional Health

- ✓ Everyday stress
- ✓ Anxiety reduction
- ✓ Relationships with others
- ✓ Anger management



Emotions are not just what we think of in a given moment.

Emotions tend to be feelings we have for a **long time & may affect our attitude & relationships**, if not expressed in a healthy way.

Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your emotional health –

❖ **Learn to let go**

*There will be days where things don't go according to plan.
Try not to worry about things that are beyond your control.
Focus on the positives & what went according to plan.
It will leave you feeling happier & lighter!*

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Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your emotional health –

❖ **Celebrate the small achievements**

Sometimes, as parents you tend to focus on the next milestone to cross. In the process you may miss celebrating milestones achieved. Try to balance living in the present and appreciate them! One step for you but it maybe a giant leap for your child.





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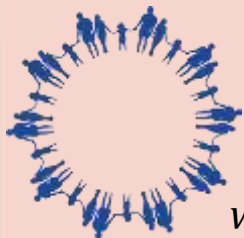
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Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your emotional health –

❖ **Talk it out**

Keep a diary! Writing down how you are feeling can also help monitor your thoughts & emotions. Find a friend or family member to confide in & feel supported.





Social Health

✓ Maintaining
healthy
relationships
with your spouse



Your **social health** determines how your **relationships & interactions** affect your emotions.

Relationships with your spouse, family & friends are constantly changing. It is important to **work** on these relationships & **communicate** with the other person at all times.

Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your social health with your spouse –

Communication is key!

Constantly engaging in communication with your partner on your child's progress will help share responsibilities & feelings.

Updating one another will also help your partner feel involved in the child's life & reduce pressure on any single parent.





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Accepting a difference of opinion

It is perfectly fine to agree to disagree on certain matters with your partner.

Embrace a difference of opinion as a healthy aspect of the decision-making process.

Constructively discuss & come together towards a collective decision to safeguard the child's best interests.





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You are best as a team!

It is easy for the child's responsibility to fall onto the care of the primary caregiver.

Try and make decisions together with your partner to the extent you can on matters related to the child's health.





Social Health

- ✓ Maintaining healthy with family
- ✓ Finding your support network



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Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your social health within your family –

Give all your children attention & care

It is natural to invest more time into your special child's life.

Divide time between all your children & try to plan activities with each of them.

Talk to them about their day & their interests!





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Make a timetable & share responsibilities with family members

Break the routine, make sure every member of the house partakes in responsibility of chores.

It can change according to the person's varying schedules but make it a priority to work as a team





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Fun time as a family

Make sure you have one assigned night where you make dinner together & catch up on what everyone is doing.

Make sure you talk about topics that are **not** limited to your child's diagnosis/therapies. Plan fun activities, where you can go out & have some family bonding time.





Social Health

- ✓ Have a healthy social life outside of the family too
- ✓ Finding your support network



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Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your social health within your family –

**Dedicate time for some much needed
chit chat with friends**

While most of your time maybe invested in attending to family, dedicate sometime each week to catch up with a friend over coffee or a movie. Bonding over your interests and sharing a few laughs with a friend can leave you charged up for the day.





Spiritual Health

- ✓ Your connection to yourself
- ✓ Knowing who you are beyond being a parent or spouse.
- ✓ Your hobbies & interests



Often times, in the fast pace of life & care-giving you may lose the connection with yourself.

Care-giving is a part of your life, not your whole life!

Take a moment for yourself & have time to connect with yourself as a person outside of being a caregiver, spouse & child.

Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your spiritual health –

Me-Time is your time

Everyone needs a break. Make sure that you have your me-time.

This will help you feel refreshed & make you more energetic Your positive energy will impact everyone around you in the family, including you special child.





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Here are some tips to help you get thinking about your spiritual health –

❖ **Affirmations – You got this!**

Affirmations is a sentence you tell yourself at the start of the day to influence your attitude for the day

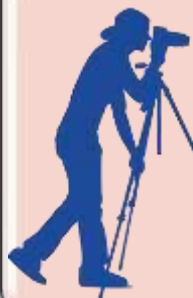
“My child is more than his diagnosis”

“I will focus on my child's happiness & well being but will not sacrifice my own”

“I know I am strong but also know it's okay to ask for help”

“Everyday is a challenge & I can handle it ”





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The 10minute rule

10 minutes of meditation in the morning will help start it on a positive note. Count to 10, take a minute & a deep breathe before you deal with a problem.

[Click here : 10 activities for carving out some Me-time](#)



As a parent,

There will always be times when you feel alone or sad.

There will be times when you don't see any improvements & there will be a few hard days.

But,

the most important thing to remember is there will also be good days as well.

Try & accentuate the positive

Remember, there will be -

Days where your child will achieve a milestone..

Days when you find parents in your peer support to provide
you support, comfort & reassurance that you seek.

Days when you have a wonderful time with your entire family.

You just have to take it one day at a time.

Never hesitate to ask for help.

Be aware of your own limits & put yourself first as you journey through life.



Are you the primary care-giver a child with special needs?

Does your care-giving role leave you exhausted & less yourself?



***DO NOT STRUGGLE IN SILENCE.
HELP IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE WHEN YOU NEED IT.
[All you have to do is ask.](#)***



Whom to approach?

You can seek a **Clinical Psychologist** or a **Counsellor** to talk to someone about it.

Ask for suggestions on the Nayi Disha Peer group & looks up experts on the [Nayi Disha Service Provider Directory](#).

Nayi Disha & parents are here to help!

Nayi Disha's **parent WhatsApp groups** & **monthly support groups**
are here
for all your doubts regarding raising a special-needs child.

To join the parent community &/or for more information,
write to us:

contactus@nayi-disha.org and visit www.nayi-disha.org for more
resources on parent self-care.

