

TRANSITIONING FROM PARENT TO COACH

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD THROUGH THEIR LIFESPAN AND INTO ADULTHOOD

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- I am a “forever parent” caretaker to an adult child with medical and behavioral complexities.
- Partners in Policy Making Graduate 2010
- FOCUS Academy Faculty
- Educate and coach other Forever Parents on moving from Barely Surviving to Thriving



About Me

Founder of Navigate Your Healing, LLC
Public Speaker
Course Developer
Mom to Spencer

Let's Start With the Obvious

- Parenting is stressful.
- Parenting a child with one or more disabilities is stressful to the Nth degree.
- Being a Forever Parent means constantly never feeling like you have enough, you're doing enough, or that others are helping you enough.
- We also have a community of other parents who are so generous with their time and their stories and their suggestions.

There is No Roadmap

- Every caregiver's journey is different.
- The hard part is forging the path that works for you.
- Partners in Policymaking gave me permission to:
 - Think differently about my son's life and how to craft a life that works for him.
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Housing
 - Relationships

Theory to Reality

- Puberty was my “on-ramp” to pivoting my role from MOM to COACH.
- This change was necessary because life got really intense and volatile.
- How can I parent this child to support their growth and development but also to protect them?
 1. Started by offering more privacy and space.
 2. Continued by assigning more responsibility.

Opportunity of Risk

3. Dignity of Risk

"Overprotection may appear on the surface to be kind, but it can be really evil. An over supply can smother people emotionally, squeeze the life out of their hopes and expectations, and strip them of their dignity. Overprotection can keep people from becoming all they could become. Many of our best achievements came the hard way: We took risks, fell flat, suffered, picked ourselves up, and tried again"

-Author of Dignity of Risk, Robert Perske, 1972

Opportunity of Risk

Basis of Supported Decision Making

“Supported decision making is the idea that people with mental or intellectual disabilities should make decisions about their own lives with the support of a team of people.”

Risk can feel scary to us as parents, we naturally want to protect.

Adults with disabilities will spend their entire lives being told who they are, what they are capable of and what they can and cannot do based on agency/organizational rules and policies.

Strategies for Moving from PARENT to COACH

4. Familiarize yourself with the differences between school-based services and adult services.
 - Different structure, different goals, different peer group
 - Not mandated
 - More “hands-off”
 - Less parent involvement

5. Mindset - Different doesn't always mean worse!
 - Opportunity
 - New and Unique experiences
 - Potentially MORE control over choices and options
 - Start practicing IDEA EXPANSION now

Strategies for Moving from PARENT to COACH

6. Learn and practice Supported Decision Making – start with the small stuff!

7. Ask yourself: What are my biases in regards to my child's future? Are those biases unintentionally limiting them?

“Is it true though?”

“What if.....”

“Am I doing things for my child that they could be doing for themselves because it's easier for me?”

Strategies for Moving from PARENT to COACH

Adults with disabilities are very often infantilized because of their support needs.

Fostering independence is paramount. This isn't total independence, it's independence within the context of their lives.

It's OK to remind other people that your child is an adult.

Strategies for Moving from PARENT to COACH

8. Radical Acceptance

Radical acceptance is NOT approval, but rather completely and totally accepting with our mind, body and spirit that we cannot currently change the present facts, even if we do not like them. By choosing to radically accept the things that are out of our control, we prevent ourselves from becoming stuck in unhappiness, bitterness, anger and sadness and we can stop suffering.

Summary

1. Give more space and independence
2. Assign more responsibility
3. Opportunity of Risk
4. Prepare for the differences in Adult Services
5. Mindset around risk and change
6. Learn and practice Supported Decision Making
7. Self-Awareness about biases
8. Radical Acceptance



THANK YOU

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