

OCALI | Podcast - Episode 6 Interview with Ginny

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JENNIFER

Welcome to From My Perspective. This is OCALI's Family and Community Outreach Center podcast. In these podcasts you will hear from people with disabilities, their families, friends, co-workers and neighbors. You'll hear about everyday life, their passions, their interest, their opinions. You'll be inspired. You might laugh or cry. But most importantly you will better understand what life is like from our perspective.

BAVRY:

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I'm your host Jen Bavry, Program Director of the OCALI Family and Community Outreach Center.

During this episode, we will explore the importance of self-care. With me today is Ginny who is a parent of a young adult with autism. Ginny also provides support for families and individuals with autism through her work with the Autism Society, Central Ohio.

Welcome Ginny to OCALI's From My Perspective.

GINNY:

Hi, thanks for having me.

So Ginny, you know that self care is essential for the well-being of any individual, family member or professional. And this can be even more so with those who have autism in their lives. Often times the experiences and emotions one might feel can make the ability to practice self-care seem unattainable.

GINNY:

Jen, I could not agree more with that statement.

JEN:

So as a parent and family member, often the focus is on the needs of the family member with autism, you know, setting aside your own needs while not realizing the effect that this actually can have on your own self-care.

So as a parent, what are your thoughts about self care for yourself and your family?

GINNY:

Well for me self-care means taking time for me. Being true to myself. Protecting my well-being my stress levels and my happiness and again just reiterating just taking time for me.

JEN:

So have you found in moments during your day where you kind of recognize that self-care is

needed. And you know, what does that look like for you?

GINNY: Well, there are times in my days where I feel overwhelmed, a lot of anxiety. My heart rate may rise. I might sweat a little bit. I am just really feeling overwhelmed. And in those moments I need to remember self-care and think to myself even if I can just take five long deep breaths it's helpful. That is self care. And there are days where I want to do a little bit more, maybe take a walk or read a book, and it's okay that I can't. Because, unfortunately in our lives, you know, we

can't always fit in but then think to yourself, let's prioritize it for tomorrow. You know, these five deep breaths are going to work for today.

JEN: You're so right Ginny. I mean taking deep breaths and just having something simple that you can add in in those moments is really helpful. And I know that for some parents sometimes as you mentioned, it's challenging to be able to add in something in those moments. What are some things that maybe you have tried in addition to the deep breaths, where ... you know ... things that you've explored that have worked or didn't work.

GINNY: Yes, so actually I have tried a few things since the beginning of 2019. The first thing is I've started doing restorative yoga. I do it once a month and it has been so rewarding for me. It is very relaxing. I had never explored it before and when I leave there I feel refreshed. I feel ready to conquer the world. I feel like I am a new person.

JEN: That's great.

GINNY: I also love to read and I decided since it's very hard for me to carve out some time in the day to read a book. I joined a book club.

JEN: Oh wonderful!

GINNY: And it really has helped me ensure that I am going to read. Not only do I enjoy the reading but I enjoy the individuals that are in my book club too. It's just a nice time for me to concentrate on the book and concentrating on getting to know some other people and it's been wonderful. I've truly loved that experience.

I also started walking. 10 minutes. That's it. I put on my headphones, go outside walk for 10 minutes. I'd love to be able to carve out more time. Eventually. Hopefully I will. But as you know, ten minutes is hard, sometimes even to do that.

JEN: Right, and just being able to add 10 minutes in every day is probably a key thing too, in the fact that if you start a smaller pace ...

GINNY: That's right.

JEN: ... you can add in more longer and especially as the weather starts getting better you might want to be out a little bit longer.

So with your role with Autism Society Central Ohio, I know that you connect with families all the time and I'm sure they're dealing with some of the same things here. So what might be some words of encouragement that you could send out to family members about self-care.

GINNY: Well first I would like to let them know how important self-care is. Taking time for yourself. It's vital to be true to yourself. It's vital, vital to be a better parent, a better husband, a better wife, a better person, a better friend. And just if you can carve out five minutes for yourself, even if you started every other day and work up to maybe doing something every day and work up to doing

it maybe a little bit longer everyday. It's so important we need to take care of ourselves because if we, ourselves, are not taking care of it then hard for us to take care of others. And we forget that all the time as we always feel like we need to take care of those that rely on us, but we also need to take care of ourselves.

JEN: You are absolutely right. I mean that is that is the focus is that you do need to make sure that you are thinking of yourself when you can and how you can and introducing different things into your daily routine that will really help support you. Because you're right a better you ... a better, your family member ... a better, individual in your life ... a better, relationships you have with those outside of your home.

GINNY: I agree. And I think the other thing that's important to say is it doesn't matter what your self-care routine or what it is that you want to do as long as it makes you happy. That's what's important. The ones that I mentioned are things that are important to me, but you know, whatever it is that you enjoy just carve out time to do that for yourself, maybe meditation, eating better, you know watching a movie.

There are so many things out there. It's whatever that individual enjoys. It'll help them relax. That's also equally as important. They need to personalize their self-care.

JEN: They do.

Yeah, that's absolutely right Ginny. Thank you so much for providing your input and your perspective on self care for family members, for parents, for individuals, and for really anyone.

GINNY: Jen, thank you so much for having me. I truly enjoyed it.

Thanks.

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JEN: Thank you for listening to this episode of From My Perspective. If you would like to learn more about OCALI and its resources, please visit ocali.org.