

The Invisible Weight Parents/Caregivers of Children with Disabilities Carry

By: April Siepman, Lizabel Rivera-Coriano,
Angela Jollineau, & Melissa Snyder





Agenda

Introductions

Emotional / Physiological Weight

Practical / Logistical Weight

Chronic Self-Neglect

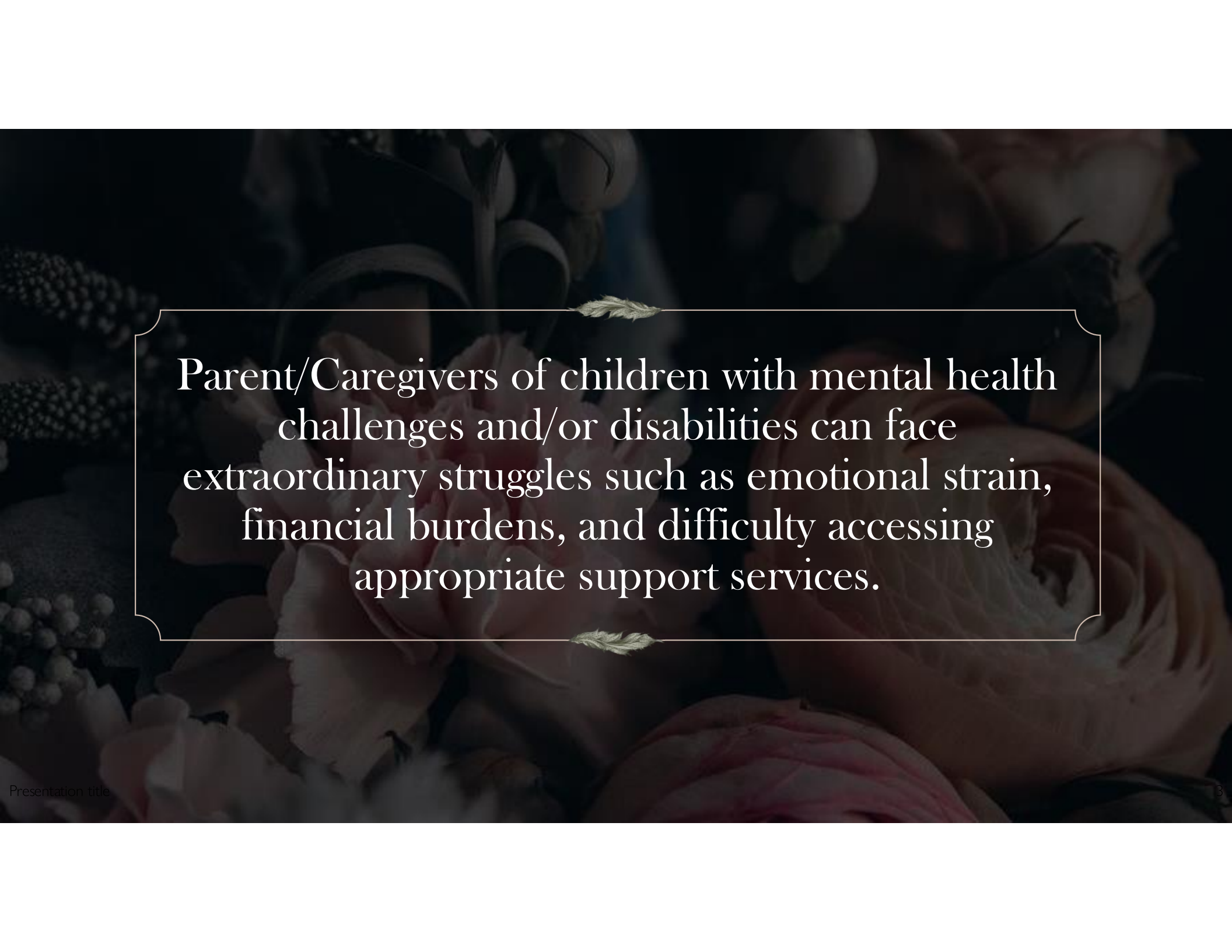
Audience Participation / Activity

Finding Balance

Final tips, takeaways

Questions & Feedback





Parent/Caregivers of children with mental health challenges and/or disabilities can face extraordinary struggles such as emotional strain, financial burdens, and difficulty accessing appropriate support services.

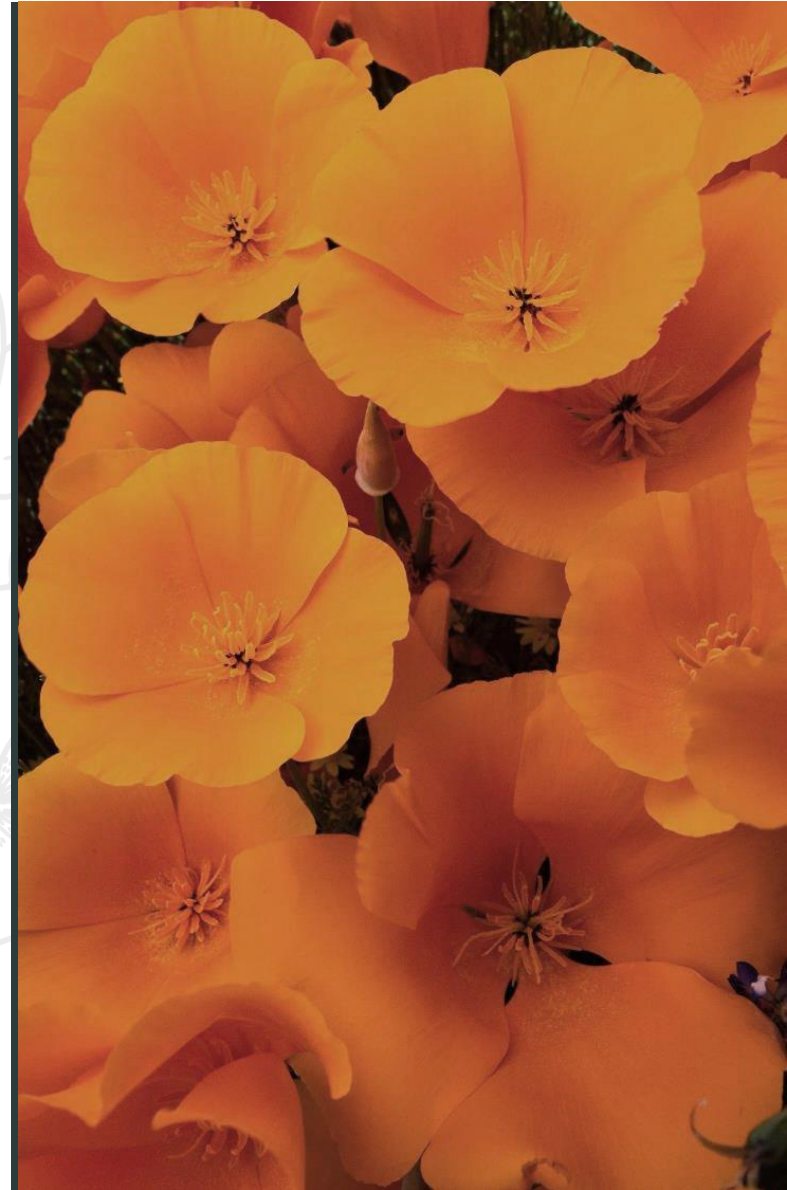


Emotional and Physiological Challenges

Emotional and Physiological Challenges



- Increased stress and anxiety
- Grief and loss
- Social isolation / lack of understanding
- Stigma and discrimination
- Marital strain
- Self blame
- and more...





Practical and Logistical Challenges



Practical and Logistical Challenges



- Navigating systems (School, Healthcare, etc...)
- Juggling multiple responsibilities
- Advocating for care
- Lack of support
- Dealing with difficult behaviors
- Barriers (Financial, Transportation, etc...)



Chronic Self-Neglect



Chronic Self-Neglect



- Parental exhaustion
- Social isolation
- Untreated mental / physical health issues
- Negative impact on relationships
- Lack of joy in parenting
- Impact on child's wellbeing
- Risk of crisis situations





Audience Interactive Activity

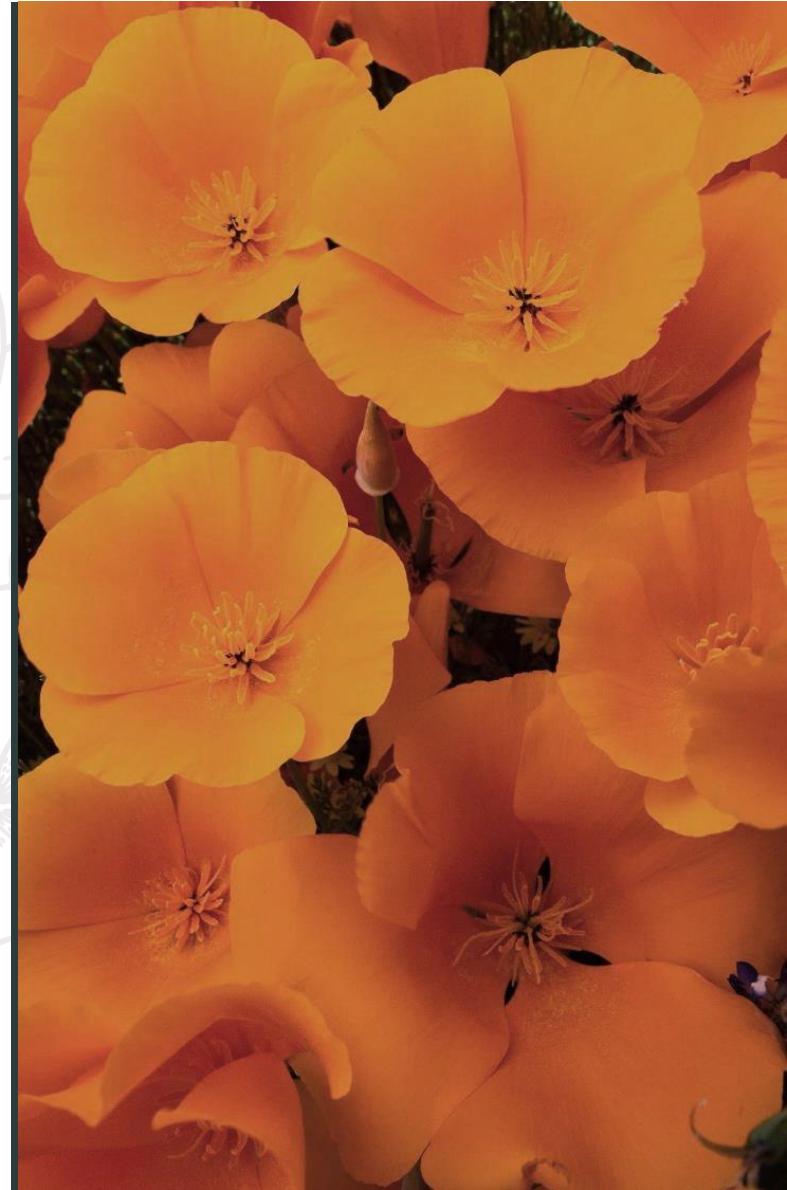


Finding Balance

Finding Balance



- Redefine balance
- Use survival vs sustainable systems
- Anchoring your day with micro routines
- Protect your identity as a parent and person
- Structure Support, not just emergency help
- Stop doing it alone
- Forgive yourself daily





Final Thought

Balance for parents in crisis looks like imperfection with purpose.
You don't need perfect days, you need a system that gives you just enough
energy to keep going, loving, and living because better days will come.

Thank you



Lizabel Rivera-Coriano Lrivera-Coriano@iskzoo.org

Melissa Snyder Msnyder@iskzoo.org



References

Wilson P. (2024). *Challenges of Invisible Caregivers*

OpenAI. (2025). *ChatGPT*

