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Stress Less, Live Better: 5 Simple Steps to Ease Anxiety, Worry, and Self-Criticism
Diane Sanford, Praeclarus Press © 2017, 130 pages, paperback, \$15.95

Available from: <http://stores.praeclaruspress.com/stress-less-live-better-5-simple-steps-to-ease-anxiety-worry-and-self-criticism/>

Stress Less, Live Better takes a non-traditional approach to reducing stress by using mindfulness techniques. Throughout the book, Dr. Sanford gives prime examples on the benefits of using five mindfulness techniques to not only lower stress, but also lower instances of health risks that all women are susceptible to such as depression, anxiety, migraines, irritable bowel syndrome, and pain.

It is no surprise that women in the United States experience sadness, anxiety, and depression in the postpartum period. The newest CDC research shows that one in nine women may experience symptoms of postpartum depression (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Recent studies have shown that 4% of postpartum fathers experience these same emotions. Of course, outside of those statistics, there is everyday anxiety associated with pregnancy, having a new baby, and adjusting to this whole new world (financially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically). The mindfulness techniques portrayed by Dr. Sanford can ease this anxiety and depression and help big life changes to become a moment of temporary stress. “This too shall pass” is frequently cited in the text as the key component of Dr. Sanford’s technique.

Mindfulness techniques are very often dismissed as irrelevant practice. However, Dr. Sanford provides her readers with many references proving mindfulness to be an evidence-based

practice. The feeling of overall calm throughout the book, left me feeling relaxed and less stressed—a testament to testing out her steps to decrease worry, anxiety, and self-criticism. We all fall victim to stress when we are birth and breastfeeding helpers. We create relationships with our clients and relive our own experiences through the experience of helping others. Our work is heavy and emotional. This text is just as relevant to the professional as it is to the client.

While the mindfulness techniques offered in the book are helpful in any situation, the author is primarily focused on women in their prenatal and postpartum times, and through menopause. We see these women every day in our clinical practice. They are tired, excited, frustrated, worried, anxious, and may be unconcerned about their own health because they are focused on their babies. By learning these mindfulness techniques, and suggesting this book to our own clients, we are better helping the population we serve. After all, “If momma ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy!”

Reference

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). Depression among women. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/depression/index.htm>

Stephanie Carroll, BS, IBCLC, CLS, CLC, is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) who has been practicing in the breastfeeding field since 2010. Since obtaining her IBCLC certification, Stephanie has worked as a breastfeeding coordinator at WIC, an in-hospital lactation consultant, and a representative for a breast pump DME. Stephanie continues to help new families reach their breastfeeding goals through her private practice located in SE Ohio and as the founder and acting president of Appalachian Breastfeeding Network.