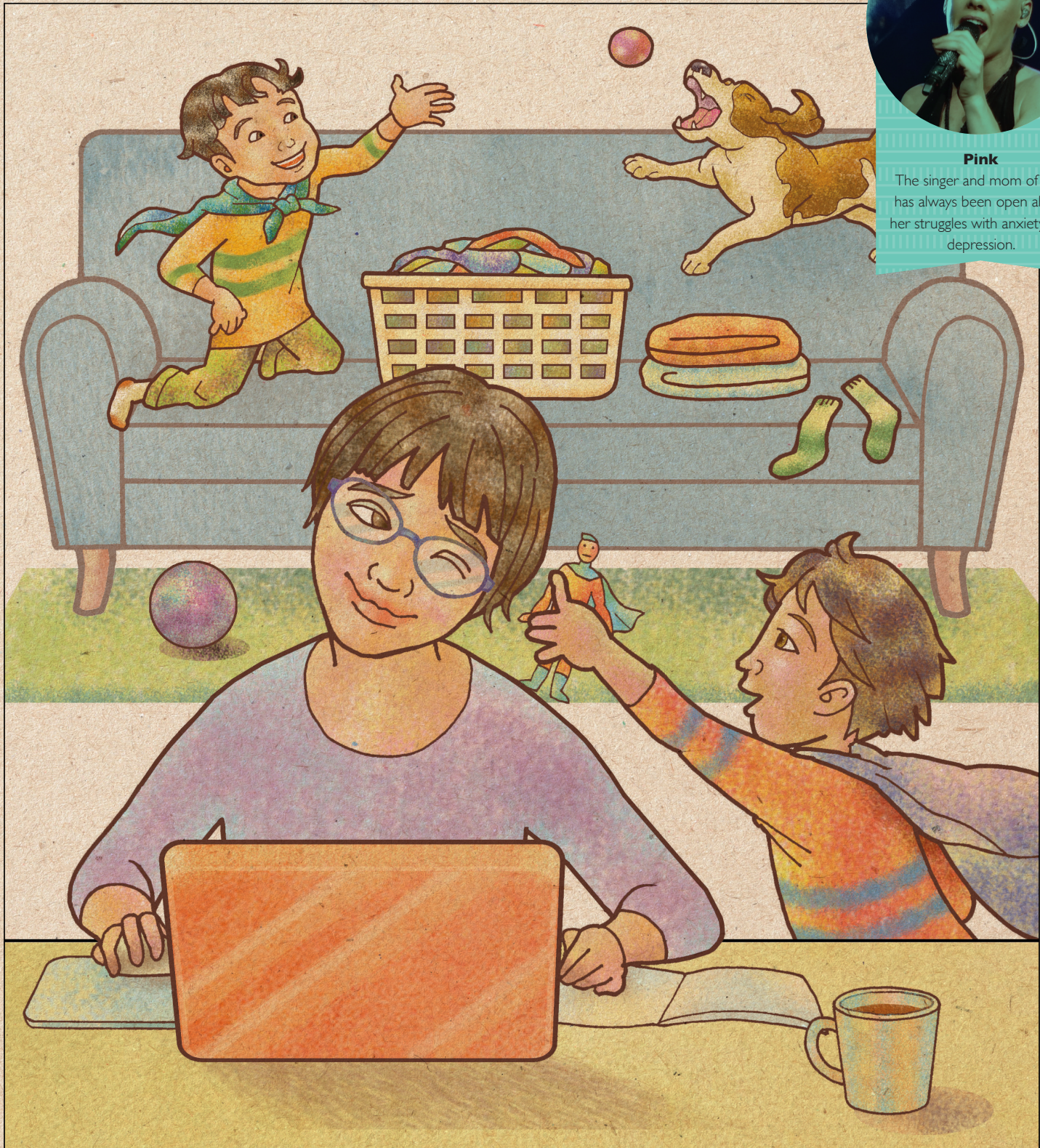


FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS



Pink

The singer and mom of two has always been open about her struggles with anxiety and depression.



Managing Work-From-Home Stress

A local licensed professional counselor offers three tips for coping with the stress of working from home while children are remote learning this year. *By Stacey Winconek*

This time last year, our lives were normal. We packed our children's lunches and backpacks before sending them off to school, and many of us headed to work shortly after. And then, the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe and completely changed our lives — how we work, how our children learn and even how we unwind.

While many parents hoped their children would return to in-person learning this fall, several districts opted for remote learning, causing some parents to continue to work from home as their children had their own set of Zoom calls and assignments to manage.

Adding to the stress of a global pandemic, parents working from home while in the next room their kids are attending class via Zoom often leads to anxiety, depression and other mental health issues. Studies show that children exposed to parental stress, anxiety and depression are more likely to experience these issues, as well.

So, how can parents cope and keep their homes as stress-free as possible?

"Give yourself some grace this year," says Stephanie Carney, a Howell-based licensed professional counselor and mom of three. "We are all trying to get through this and grace is the key word for a lot of things," Carney says.

Here, Carney offers three tips on managing work-from-home stress.

Take time to decompress

Prior to COVID-19, the commute to and from work offered parents an opportunity to have alone time, unwind from a stressful day and mentally prepare for home life. Now, work and home have bled together, and there isn't a chance for parents to decompress. But, Carney says, it's important to build in that time.

"I think it's helpful to take a walk or do something to separate the day from coming home, even if you don't have that commute anymore," she says. "Even if it's going into the room for 10 minutes and changing your clothes."

Kids will be OK for a few minutes without you, Carney says, so don't feel guilty about taking this time.

Listen to your favorite song, read a chapter in a book, call a friend, watch a show on Netflix — find what works for you. "If you can't do it right after work, then make sure that the kids go to bed before you so that you can have some time then," she adds.

Ask for adjustments

Whether you need to ask for an extension on a project or an adjustment to your work hours, don't be afraid to broach these topics with your employer.

"It doesn't hurt to ask," she says. "You might be surprised at what they are willing to do to accommodate you."

The same goes for your child's school.

"We struggled a lot in the spring. My

husband quarantined away from us for six weeks because he didn't feel safe coming home to us when it all started and my son had these assignments due, and they really didn't plan out what they needed to do so I had to submit them all," Carney says. "I had to say (to the teacher), 'he's doing them but I can't handle the stress of being responsible for submitting these assignments every day, and he has anxiety about that so we need to figure out something different,' so I think it's really important to look at your situation and ways that you can make adjustments somehow."

Lower your expectations

Didn't finish the laundry? Haven't gone grocery shopping? It's OK, and parents should avoid adding additional stress on themselves.

"You have to figure out some ways to let things go and forgive yourself for doing that," Carney says. It's a good teaching moment for your kids, she notes, because they may not be able to accomplish things in the same manner this school year.

"This year sucks for everybody, even those of us who have kids in school. Everything is different and this year is not going to be the difference between your kid going to Harvard and your kid not getting into college," she says. "Everyone is in a weird place right now, and you just have to realize this is not the year to put that stress on yourself."

MANAGING STRESS

Dealing with career demands while working at home as children are learning remotely is a challenge for everyone in the family, but there's hope and help.

In this installment of Opening Minds, Ending Stigma, parents can find advice on how to cope with this unprecedented time for families across the globe. We hope you find this advice helpful and share it with others.



Duane Tarnacki
Trustee,
Flinn Foundation

Brought to you by



ETHEL & JAMES

FLINN FOUNDATION

Find more information at [FlinnFoundation.org](https://www.flinnfoundation.org).