

Caregiving: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

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CAREGIVING • AGING • RESILIENCE
— ETHICS • SPIRITUALITY —

Introduction

- Caregiver composition
- Consequences of caregiving
- Essentials of self-care for caregivers
- Engaging others in your self-care plan

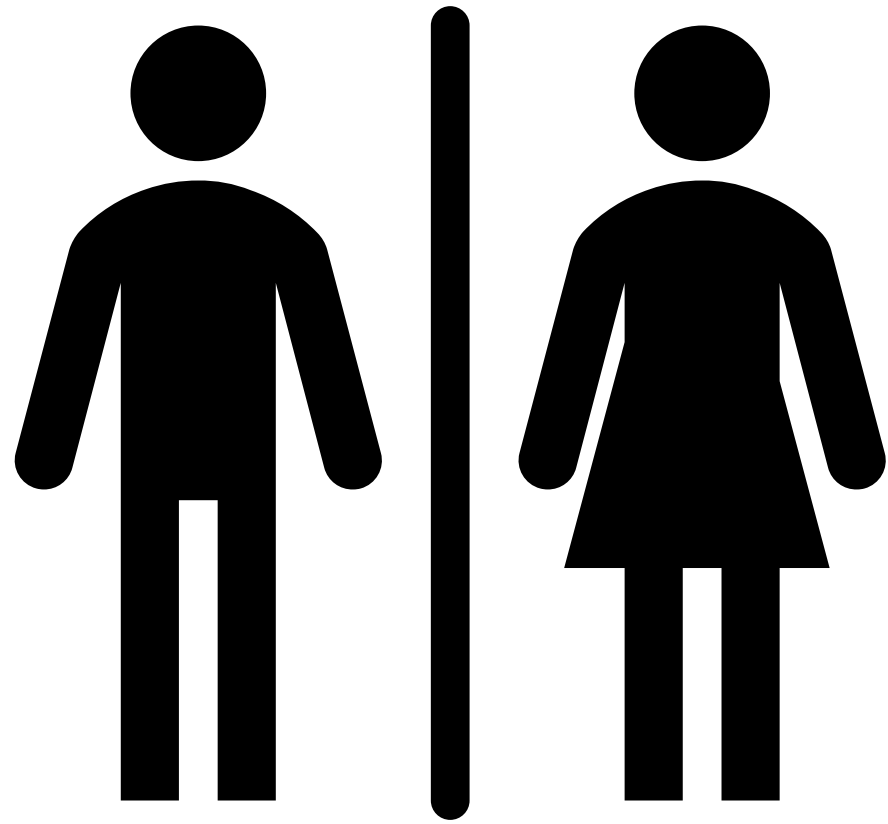
Caregiving

There are only four kinds of people in the world—those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.

Rosalyn Carter



Who Are Caregivers?



One in five adults

60% are women

24% are 65 years old or older

37% are caring for a parent or parent-in-law

22% of caregivers are providing care to someone with dementia

Many are caregivers to parents and children

Half provided care more than two years

One-third provide care >20 hours/week

What Do Caregivers Do?



Nursing



Financial planning/
management



Chauffeur



Household
tasks



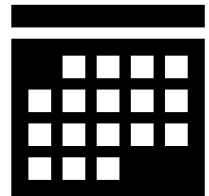
Decision-making



Medication
management

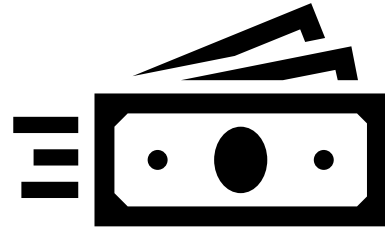


Personal care/
hygiene

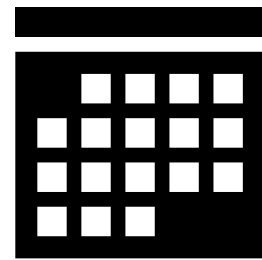


Time
management

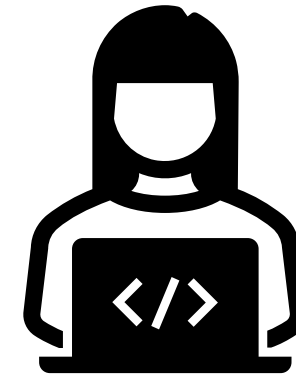
Losses for Caregivers



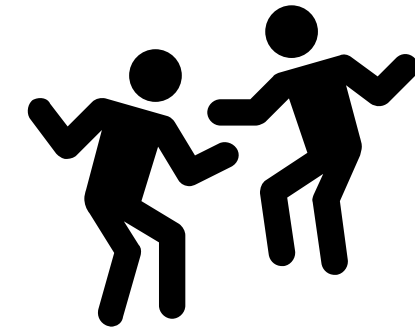
Financial
Security



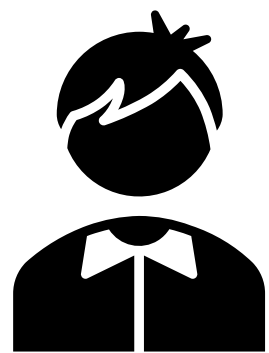
Planned
Future



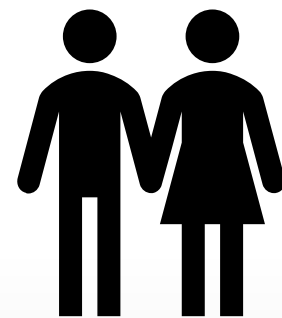
Income/
Work



Companionship



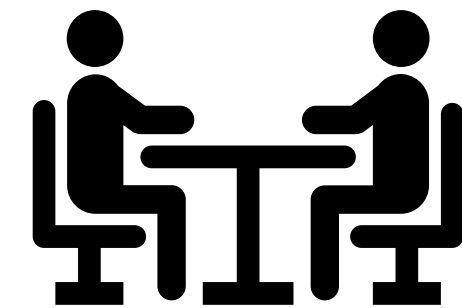
Identity



Role
Changes



Free Time



Socialization and
Communication

Caregiver Challenges

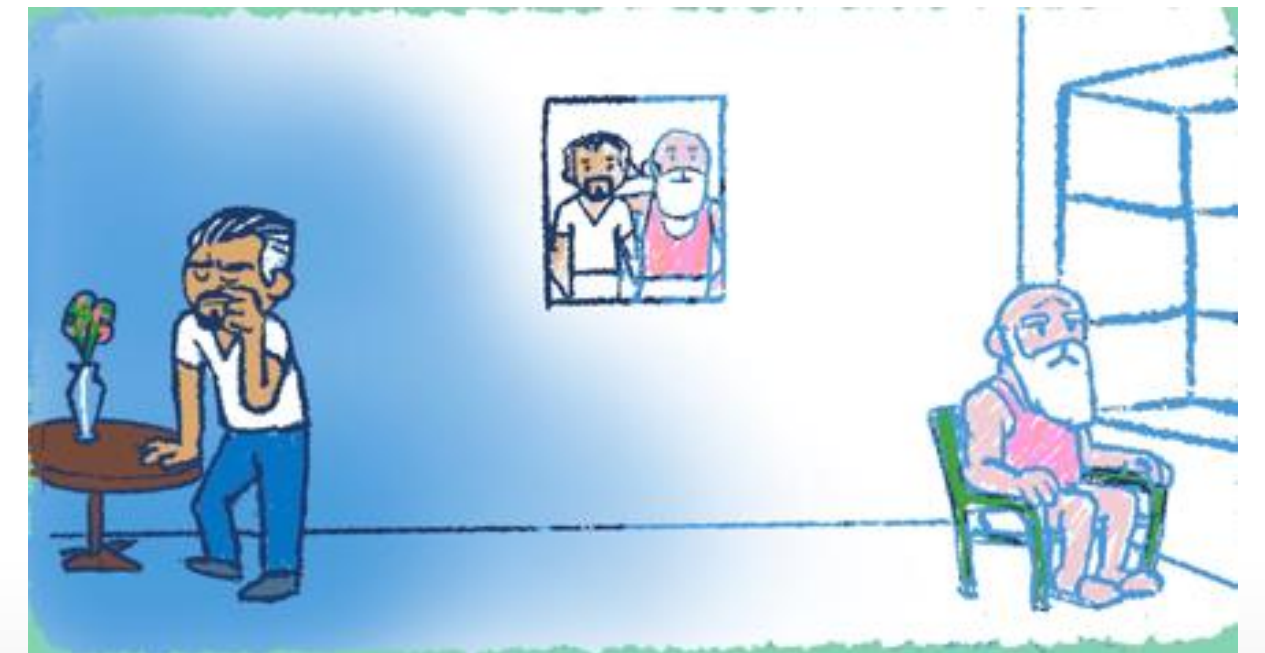
Gaining or Losing Weight



Being Easily Irritated or Angered



Unpredictable sleep Schedule



Feeling Isolated or Deserted

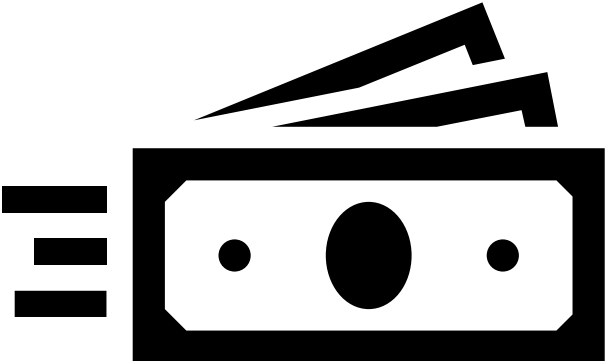
Migraines and Body Aches



Caregiver Outcomes



Poorer
Physical
Health



Financial Insecurity

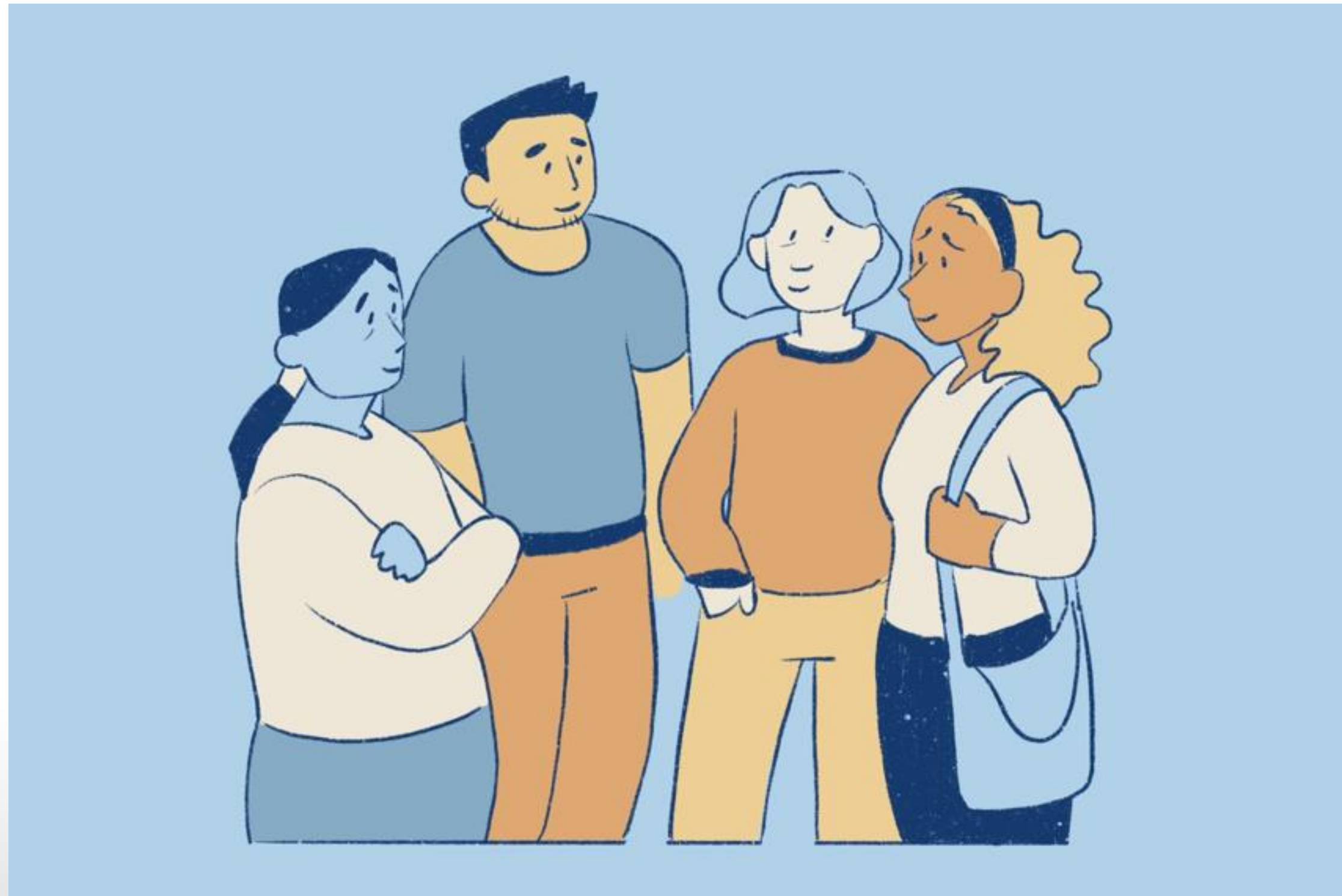


SAD: Stress,
Anxiety,
Depression

Signs of Caregiver Stress



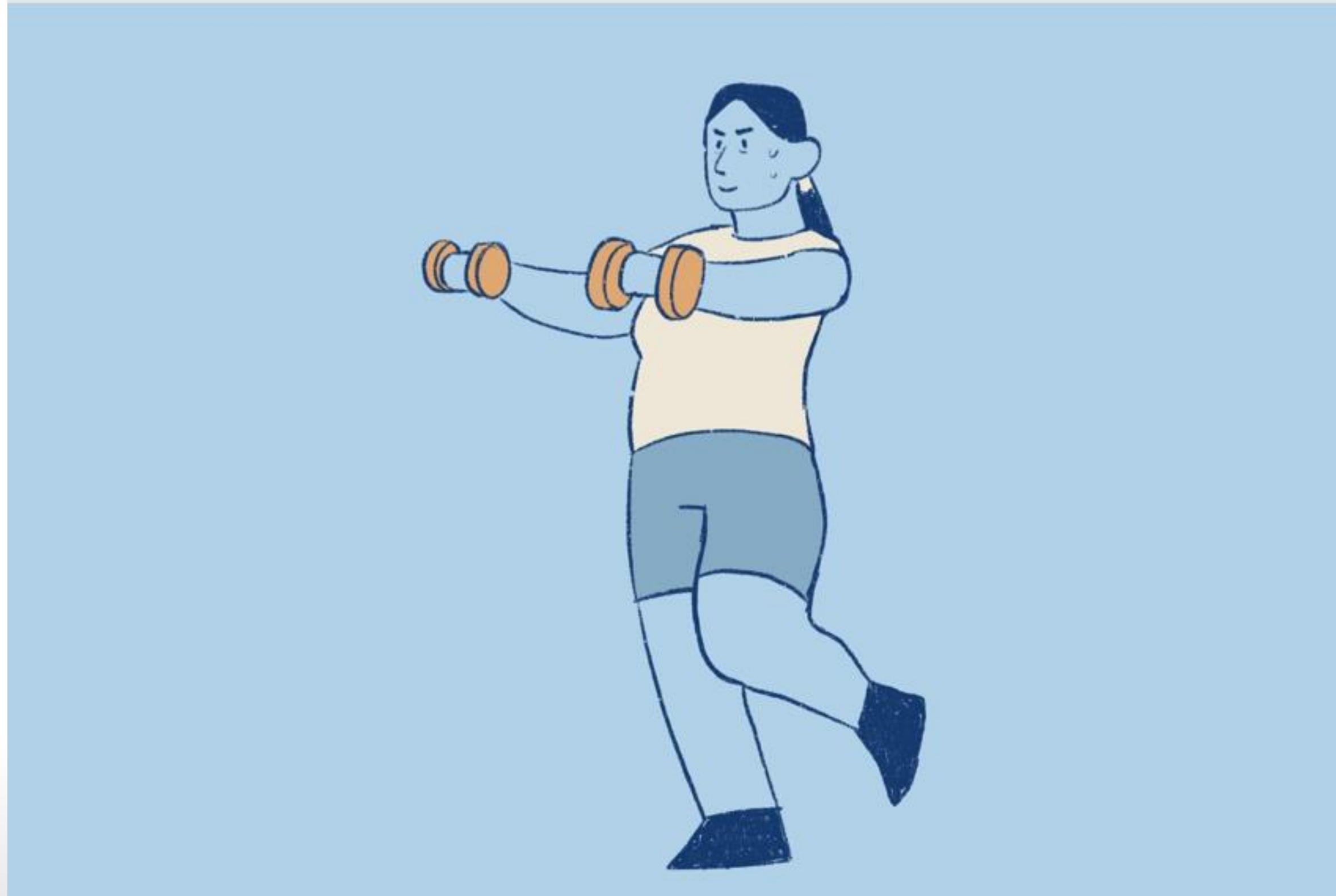
Stress Reliever: Talk to Other Caregivers and/or Join a Caregiver Support Group



Stress Reliever: Request and Accept Help from Friends and Family



Stress Reliever: Walk or Exercise Daily



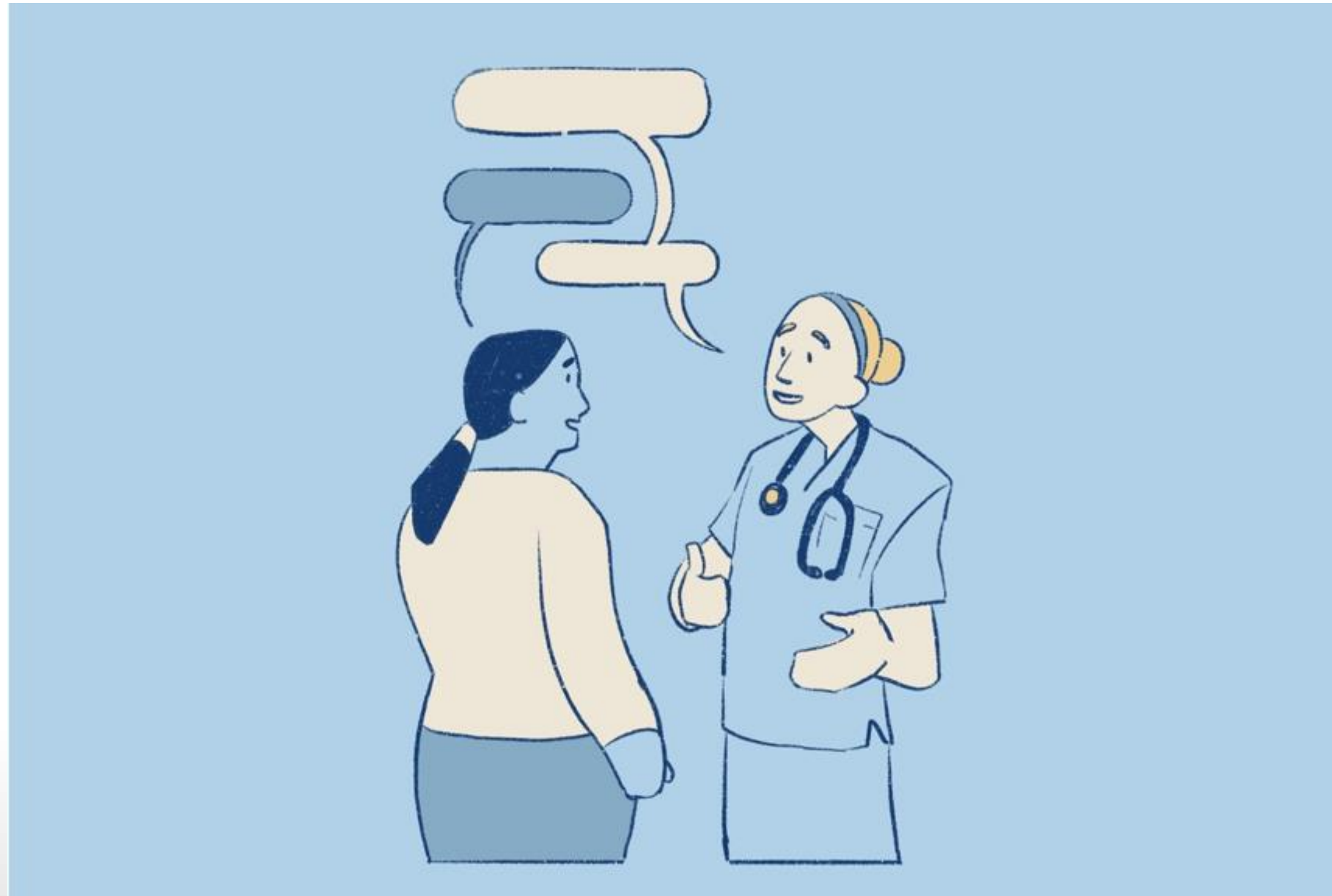
Stress Reliever: Have Reasonable Expectations (Don't "Should" on Yourself)



Stress Reliever: Focus on the Things You Can Do



Stress Reliever: Learn about the Disease Progression from Others



Stress Reliever: Spend Time Alone (Read, Enjoy Music)



Stress Reliever: Set a Routine for your Loved One and Yourself



Stress Reliever: Connect with Caregiving Resources in Your Community



Unhelpful Thought Patterns

Thought Pattern	Example
All or nothing thinking	I made a mistake; I am a total failure as a caregiver
Over-generalization	Something always goes wrong
Disqualifying the positive	Despite good test results, the disease will return
Mind reading	My family has no desire to help
Fortune-telling	This will never get easier
Emotional reasoning	I'm feeling so overwhelmed, I know I'm letting my family down
Should statements	I should be able to keep it together
Labelling and mislabelling	I'm totally incompetent

Wisdom
from
Viktor
Frankl

**“When we are no longer
able to change a
situation – we are
challenged to change
ourselves.”**

Essence of Self-Care

- Resilience: the ability to bounce back after life tears you down
- Practice resilience skills
 - Name your challenge(s)
 - Practice both/and thinking (“I am both a caregiver—and a person with my own needs.”)
 - Know and identify support systems, including family, information sources, and other resources
- Manage family holidays, celebrations, and rituals
- Revise family roles

From Frankl to Resilience

- Appreciate how resilience helps you handle stress more positively (“the ability to bounce back after life tears you down”)
- Practice resilience skills (e.g., viewing setbacks as impermanent; reframing setbacks as opportunities for growth; focusing on events you can control), to minimize the effects of stress and emergencies (<https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-skills>)

From Frankl to Wellness

- Sleep/nap well (devices OFF)
- Eat well (remember favorite snacks/desserts)
- Hydrate well
- Build movement into your day (trips to/strolls in pretty places)
- (Re)connect with your soulful/spiritual side (e.g., [re]discover prayer/meditation/music/dance/et al.)

From Frankl to Authenticity

- Soulful interactions usually AREN'T about tackling problems/changing outcomes (i.e., “fixing”)
- They usually ARE about accompanying others as they continue/complete their sacred journey
- They're most likely to occur when we offer others a compassionate/non-judgmental/non-anxious presence

Implementing Self-Care



Sleep/Nap
(Devices Off)



Eat Well



Hydrate



Build Movement
into Your Day



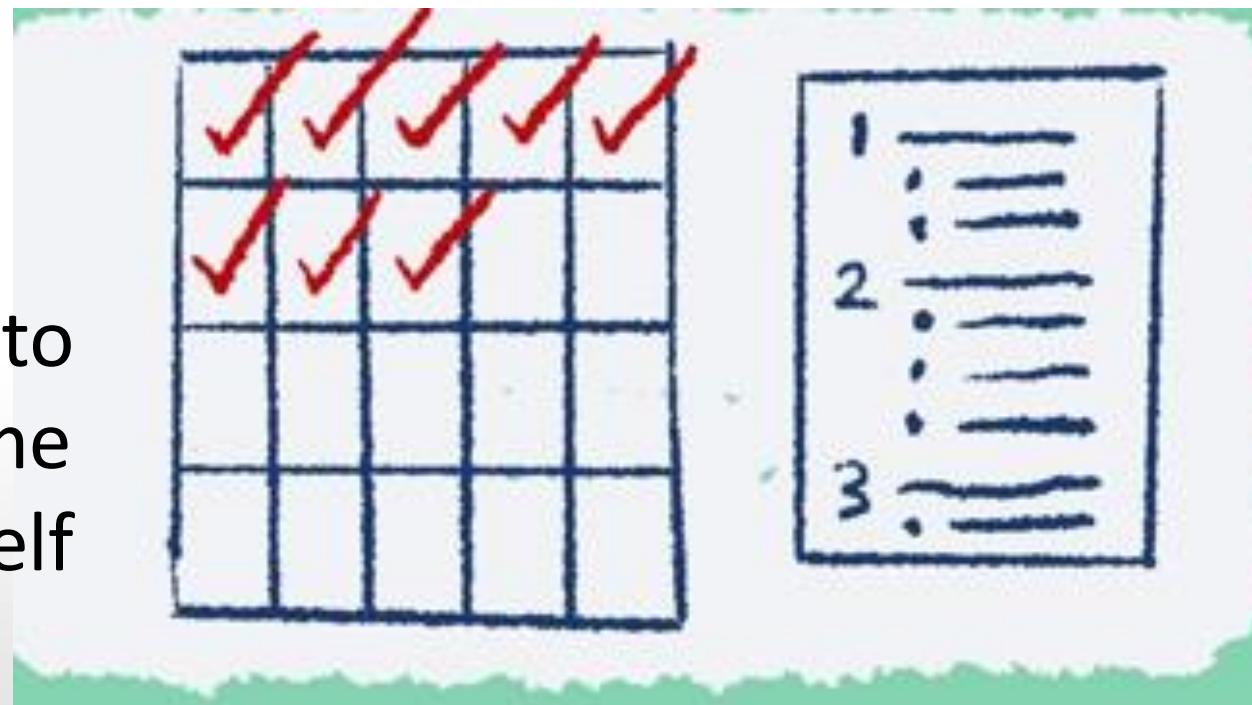
(Re)Connect with
Your Soulful/Spiritual
Side

Implementing Self-Care



Join a Support Group or Take Classes

Break Down Routines into Manageable Steps and Plan Time for Yourself



Ask for Help from Friends and Family

Creating an Actionable Self-Care Plan

- Six domains: Body (Physical), Mind (Psychological), Emotional, Spiritual, Relationship, Work (Professional)
- Pick one area to start and list a current practice
 - Ex. Mind: Read something that's not work related
- Identify an activity that you would like to incorporate *regularly*
- Make it a SMART goal (Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Relevant – Timely)
 - Ex. Mind: I will go to at least three fun events (festival, play, etc.) over the next 6 months, at least one without kids.

Barriers to Self-Care

- What will keep you from achieving your goals?
- Identify issues that are driving the behavior and work to combat them
 - Guilt?
 - Being Needed?
 - Self-Esteem?
 - Being Overwhelmed?
- Forgive yourself when you don't get it right the first time

Strategies for Success

- Look around! Find an accountability buddy and set your first check-in
- Share your plan with a loved one who will be supportive of your self-care efforts
- Make a public declaration

What's Next?

- Develop and work your plan
 - Baby to bigger steps
 - Check in with your accountability partner
- Share with others
- Continue implementing concrete strategies
- Celebrate your victories and give yourself permission to fail

At the End of the Day

- Caregivers who care for themselves remain in better physical and mental health
- Remaining healthy makes one a more effective caregiver

Questions?



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