


Caregiving: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others


Peggy L. Determeyer, PhD, MDiv, MBA, BCC, HEC-C
Director, HHCI CARES



1

Introduction


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




2

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



3

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



4

What Do Caregivers Do?

Nursing

Household tasks

Medication management

Personal care/hygiene

Financial planning/management

Decision-making

Chauffeur

Time management



5

Losses for Caregivers

Financial Security

Planned Future

Income/Work

Companionship

Identity

Role Changes

Free Time

Socialization and Communication



6

Caregiver Challenges

Unpredictable sleep Schedule

Migraines and Body Aches

Being Easily Irritated or Angered

Gaining or Losing Weight

Feeling Isolated or Deserted

©DesignMatters, Spring 2021 (Jerron Hess and Michael Gilbert)

HHCI CARES

7

Caregiver Outcomes

Poorer Physical Health

Financial Insecurity

SAD: Stress, Anxiety, Depression

HHCI CARES

8

Signs of Caregiver Stress

Sleeping too much or too little

Making medication mistakes

Feeling unable to complete daily tasks

Feeling overwhelmed

Gaining or losing a lot of weight

Depression

Anxiety

Abusing alcohol and drugs

Higher risk for chronic diseases

Obesity

Losing interest in activities they used to enjoy

Social withdrawal

©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica)

HHCI CARES

9

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

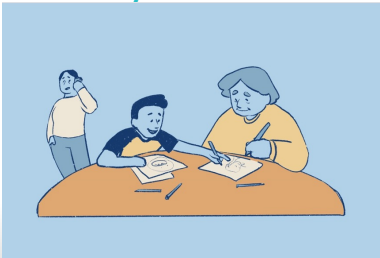


©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica)



10

Stress Reliever: Request and Accept Help from Friends and Family

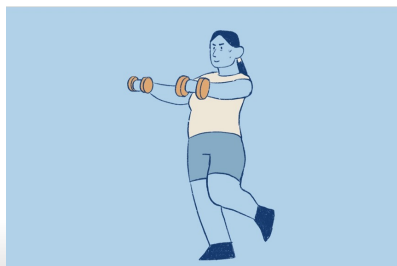


©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica)



11

Stress Reliever: Walk or Exercise Daily



©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica)



12

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



©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica) 

13

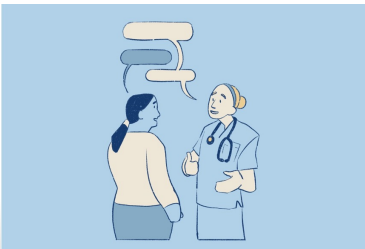
Stress Reliever: Focus on the Things You Can Do




©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica) 

14

**Stress Reliever: Learn about the Disease
Progression from Others**



©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica) 

15

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



©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica)



16

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

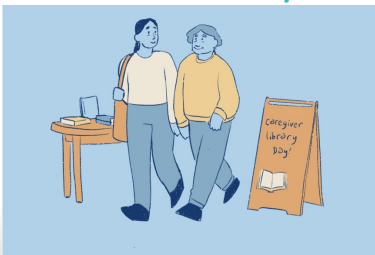


©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica)



17

Stress Reliever: Connect with Caregiving Resources in Your Community



©DesignMatters, Spring 2022 (Tori, El, Jessica)



18

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



19

Wisdom from Viktor Frankl

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



20

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



21

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>)



22

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.)



23

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



24

Implementing Self-Care

z

Sleep/Nap
(Devices Off)

Hydrate

Eat Well

Build Movement
into Your Day

(Re)Connect with
Your Soulful/Spiritual
Side

<https://www.vecteezy.com/>

25

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

26

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.

27

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



28

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



29

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



30

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



31



32

Dr. Peggy Determeyer
 McGee Fellow
 Director, HHCI CARES
 pdetermeyer@hhci.org
 346-335-8623



Rabbi Seth Stander
 Community Aging Specialist, HHCI CARES
 sstander@hhci.org
 346-335-8627



33
