Coping Techniques:

9 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS FOR CAREGIVERS

Healthy habits, strong connections and resources are important for the well-being of caregivers.

by Yvonne M. Feltman

STAY CONNECTED TO OTHERS
Sharing experiences with others can help caregivers manage stress, reduce feelings of isolation, and recognize that they are not alone. Caregivers should find someone they can talk to about their feelings like a therapist, a fellow caregiver, clergy, friend or family member.

SEEK AND ACCEPT HELP
Speak up when you need support or assistance. Join a support network. Help can come from community resources, online support forums, local groups and professionals. Consider getting help to manage meals, transportation, social activities, and services to assist with other daily needs.

GET EDUCATED
It can help to talk to medical staff about options that are available for every stage of aging or disease. Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Disability Resources Centers, Aging Info and Referral services, and other programs are trusted community links to information and services for older adults and their caregivers.

FIND RESpite SOLUTIONS
Get a break for a few hours, a few days or even longer. Respite is offered in or outside the home, in a community or faith-based agency or organization, at an adult day care program, in a hospital or healthcare facility, a nursing home, an assisted living facility, or adult foster home. Family members, friends or neighbors may also be available to act as a respite provider.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE
Don’t forget to participate in enjoyable or relaxing activities. Partake in a social outing or a hobby such as art or another creative endeavor. Read a good book, listen to music, watch a movie or relax in a warm bath. Regular self-care is a must for caregivers!

EXERCISE REGULARLY
A quick 10-minute walk outside can help improve mood, offer fresh air and a change of scenery. Daily exercise breaks can change a hectic pace & mindset. Yoga and stretching can also relax the mind and reduce the feeling of overwhelm & stress.

STAY HEALTHY
Reactions to stress can include lack of sleep, overeating, undereating, increased alcohol consumption and smoking. Be aware of these detrimental responses and receive regular health check-ups to ensure good health practices.

KEEP A POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE
Striving to maintain a positive outlook can make a real difference. Writing in a gratitude journal or simply choosing to focus on the good in daily situations can help to reduce negative thoughts and feelings resulting from stress or overwhelm.

MEDITATION & BREATHING PRACTICES
There is increasing evidence that mindful meditation can help ease psychological stresses like anxiety, depression, and pain. An effective relaxation method developed at Harvard Medical school involves deep breathing exercises.
The Six Sides of Breathing

Starting at the yellow star trace with your finger the sides of the hexagon as you take a deep breath in, feeling your shoulders rise as the air fills you. Trace over the red side as you hold your breath for a moment. Slowly breathe out as you trace the third side of the hexagon. Continue tracing around the bottom three sides of the hexagon as you complete another deep breath. Continue The Six Sides of Breathing cycle until you feel calm and relaxed.

My Calming Sequence Visual

Activity: Try this calming sequence. Does it feel good and calming? How can you change it so that it works for you?

This calming sequence goes like this: Squeeze your hands together; close your eyes and rub your head; then rub your legs. Repeat the sequence five times, bringing your stress down.

Breathing

Flower: smell the flower, blow the petals

Bulloon: take a deep breath in, blow out hand in between thumbs

Square: hold for 4 counts

Hot Air Bulloon: breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts

Straw: hold hands around mouth, breathe in deeply through nose, exhale into hands, to make balloon bigger, once it's as big as it can get, give a big breath blow it up to the sky, face inside to side to watch it float away

Belly Breathing: start by sitting down in a chair with feet flat or on floor (this case) place both hands on your belly. Breathe in for 4 counts, trying to fill belly full of air. Hold for 4 counts, then exhale for 4, expelling all air from belly, notice how it's moving when breathing.

Lazy 8 Breathing

Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.
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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is no one better to be than myself.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>I am enough.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I get better every single day.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>I am an amazing person.</td>
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<td>All of my problems have solutions.</td>
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<td>Today I am a leader.</td>
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<td>I forgive myself for my mistakes.</td>
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<td>My challenges help me grow.</td>
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<td>I am perfect just the way I am.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>My mistakes help me learn and grow.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Today is going to be a great day.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>I have courage and confidence.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>I can control my own happiness.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>I have people who love and respect me.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>I stand up for what I believe in.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>I believe in my goals and dreams.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>It's okay not to know everything.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Today I choose to think positive.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>I can get through anything.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>I can do anything I put my mind to.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>I give myself permission to make choices.</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>I can do better next time.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>I have everything I need right now.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>I am capable of so much.</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Everything will be okay.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>I believe in myself.</td>
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<td>I am proud of myself.</td>
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<td>I deserve to be happy.</td>
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<td>I am free to make my own choices.</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>I deserve to be loved.</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>I can make a difference.</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Today I choose to be confident.</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>I am in charge of my life.</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>I have the power to make my dreams true.</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>I believe in myself and my abilities.</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Good things are going to come to me.</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>I matter.</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>My confidence grows when I step outside of my comfort zone.</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>My positive thoughts create positive feelings.</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Today I will walk through my fears.</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>I am open and ready to learn.</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Every day is a fresh start.</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>If I fall, I will get back up again.</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>I am whole.</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>I only compare myself to myself.</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>I can do anything.</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>It is enough to do my best.</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>I can be anything I want to be.</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>I accept who I am.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Today is going to be an awesome day.</td>
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Activities:

**My Worry Cloud**

Write down what's in your Worry Cloud. Then, write down things that you can do to help your cloud get smaller!

**What am I worried about?**

**Happy Place**

A Happy Place is a location where you feel the calmest and most relaxed. For some people, this can be at the beach, in the woods, or in their room. Whenever you become anxious, sad, or angry, it can be helpful to imagine yourself at this place! The more details that you can imagine, as you close your eyes, the more helpful your Happy Place will be in calming you down. Answer the questions below and try to be as descriptive as you can be.

**Where is your happy place?**

- What things do you see?
- What sounds do you hear?
- What can you feel or touch?
- What do you smell/taste?
- How are you feeling?
Have your kids brainstorm ideas for what they can do for each section. These are some suggestions 😊

**OUT OF CONTROL**
- Calm Breathing
- Grounding Activity
- Calm Breathing
- Body Tightening Exercises (Progressive Muscle Relaxation)
- Change your location
- Watch a movie
- Stress Balls
- Fidget Toys
- Calm Breathing
- Be with nature or an animal
- Listen to music
- Color/Draw/Write/Craft
- Positive Self-Talk
- Go outside
- Exercise / Move around

**NERVOUS**
- Calm Breathing
- Be with nature or an animal
- Listen to music
- Color/Draw/Write/Craft
- Positive Self-Talk
- Go outside
- Exercise / Move around

**SURE**

**CALM**
Identify a feeling/emotion
Go through each body part and note any changes in those areas (ie: when I am angry my heart starts to race, I clench my fists, and I yell really loud)
Once all parts are identified, brainstorm coping strategies to use to help calm your body when feeling these emotions/feelings
MY POSITIVE THOUGHTS & AFFIRMATIONS

List some positive thoughts and affirmations you can say to yourself.

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5 MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES for children
by Big Life Journal

1. "JUST ONE BREATH" BREATHING ACTIVITY
   - Find a relaxing place, sit comfortably, and set a timer for one minute.
   - Breathe deeply in and out while paying attention to any sensations you notice or sounds you hear.
   - Take another slow deep breath, imagine the air moving down into the lungs and back up.
   - Take one more deep breath and hold for a moment, then release it.

2. CREATE A GLITTER JAR
   - Finding a jar or plastic bottle and allow your child to decorate it however they like.
   - Fill the bottle up 3/4 of the way with water. Next, add clear glue, food coloring, and glitter then shake.
   - Seal the lid and you are ready to go.

3. HEARTBEAT EXERCISE
   - Ask your child to stand up and either jump up and down or do jumping jacks for one minute.
   - At the end of that minute, have them place their hand on their heart and pay attention to how their heartbeat and their breathing feels.

4. GOING ON A SAFARI
   - Go outside on an exciting adventure, try picking up a small rock or touching a plant or flower.
   - Notice the bugs or the birds. Take a moment to kneel down and touch the earth.
   - Walk mindfully paying close attention to everything. Make sure you walk in silence because you want to notice all those little details.

5. TENSE AND RELEASE MUSCLE RELAXATION
   - Starting at the feet, gently squeeze the muscles in the feet by tightening them, then slowly releasing.
   - Next, squeeze the large muscles in the calves for 5 seconds, then gently release. Working your way up the body, squeeze the thigh muscles for 5 seconds then gently release.
   - Continue moving up the body for more relaxation.

"Allow this moment to be exactly as it is and allow yourself to be exactly as you are."
— Jon Kabat-Zinn

RAIN
Recognize what's going on Allow the experience to be there, just as it is Investigate with kindness Natural awareness, which comes from not
Pintrest also has amazing ideas just type in Mindfullness, Stress Reduction, Worry Activities etc. and there are many activities to create and follow!
**Inner Coach**

Inner coaches help us use positive self-talk to give us the courage and strength to get through stressful situations.

Difficult times I may need my inner coach are:

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My inner coach reminds me to use strategies to keep myself calm.

To help me get to the Green Zone, my inner coach reminds me to:

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My inner coach also helps to keep positive thoughts in my head so I can be successful.

My inner coach might say to me:

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**Inner Critic**

Inner critics use negative self-talk that get us nowhere. It puts defeating thoughts in my head.

Times my inner critic gets to me:

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My inner critic does not help and instead ends up making a situation worse.

My inner coach might say to me:

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I am in control of who I listen to—the inner coach or inner critic.

I can use my inner coach to defeat my inner critic by telling it:

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- 
- 

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ZONES of Regulation Activities

*Check-In*

- Feel [ ]
- Zone [ ]

ZONES Check-In

**Tools Menu**

- Listen to Music
- Stretch
- Walk
- Cery
- Read
- Jump
- Inner Coach
- See a Break
- Lazy Breathe
- Tickle
- Pull
- Aromatherapy
Vitamin N(ature):
helpful activities for kids to do outside

30 Fun Ways To Get Kids Outside In Nature (adapted from OneTimeThrough website)

1. Let your child play in the woods, bring pets for a walk, or just petting your furry friends!
2. Give them a camera (while in the woods)
3. Use binoculars
4. Go on a fungi hunt
5. Look for signs of animals
6. Color Hunt
7. Bark Rubbings
8. Build a fort
9. Have a campfire cookout or outdoor picnic
10. Go on a seed hunt
11. Search for salamanders
12. Learn about maps
13. Collect leaves
14. Make a scavenger hunt
15. Magic Spot
16. Go Camping
17. Stargaze or Moongaze
18. Make a nature alphabet book
19. Take a listening walk
20. Visit a Botanical Garden
21. Grow a Garden
22. Visit a local pond
23. Backyard BUG search
24. Adopt a Tree
25. Plant a Tree
26. Bird watching
27. Nature Crafts
28. Get on the water: fishing, canoeing, kayaks, rowboats
29. Visit a Butterfly Conservatory
30. Teach your child about their IMPACT on the Planet

Visit this website to get more directions on how to do these activities and find more resources and books!

http://onetimethrough.com/nature-deficit-disorder/