



BRIGHT Workshop

Building Resilience &
Inner Strength for
Caregivers of Persons
with Memory Loss

Session 1

1

Ground Rules



TIME

90 minutes long
May need to
interrupt



PRIVACY

Said in the
group,
Stays in the
group



PARTICIPATION

Is voluntary but,
Best way to learn



SURROUNDINGS

Check screen visibility,
Reduce noise

2

Introductions

- Your Name
- Who you are caring for
- Their diagnosis
- Tell us one thing you hope to gain from this workshop.

3

Today's Topics

01



**Stress
and
Caregiving**

02



**Consequences
of
Chronic Stress**

03



**Power
of
Balance**

4

Stress and Caregiving

- Caregiving over a long period of time takes a toll on your physical and emotional state
- Caregiving's unique challenges that often increase stress
- Chronic stress impacts health & well-being
- What stresses out you may not stress out another

5

Stress Responses

Stress is a biological response to threat

- physical, emotional, or mental.

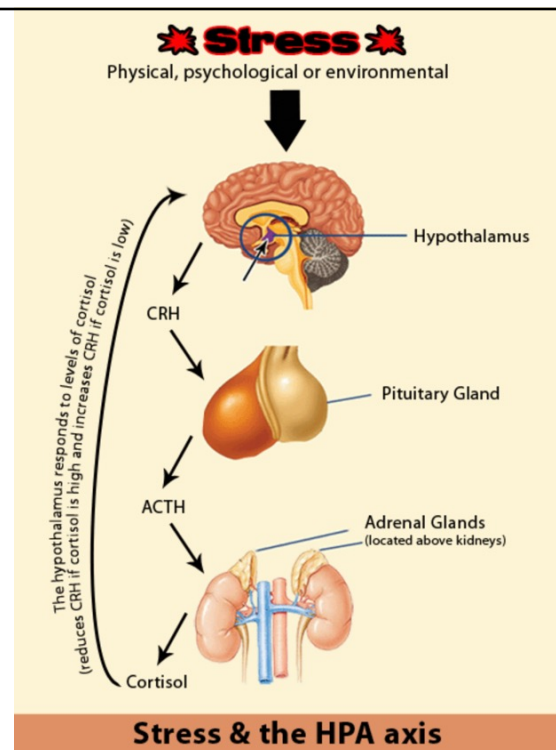
Cascading effect eventually releasing hormones cortisol & adrenaline

In response

- Breathe faster to increase oxygen levels
- Heartbeat increases
- Diverts oxygen enriched blood to large muscles
- Constricts blood vessels, Blood pressure rises
- Liver produces extra glucose to give energy boost
- Digestive system interrupted
- Muscles tighten to reduce injury

When threat is over?

- Signal is sent to return to normal
- No signal? Then stress becomes chronic



6

Consequences of Chronic Stress

Physically	Psychologically	Socially
health affected	emotional/mental state	relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High blood pressure • Heart problems • Increased susceptibility to colds and flu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression and/or Anxiety • Anger and/or Irritability • Changes in appetite • Sleep problems • Lack of energy • Hopelessness/helplessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel like a burden • Refuse assistance • Isolate increasing loneliness • Alone in caring because friends and family have drifted away

7

Recognizing Your Stress

Everyone reacts to stress differently

Need to know **your signs** so you know when to react

Recognizing Your Stress

- Think about a recent stressful experience- put yourself in that place again. Freeze that moment.
- Scan your body - where are you experiencing that stress? Is your jaw clenched? Can you feel tension in your shoulders and neck?
- Check the box wherever you are feeling stress in your body in response to this experience.

Stress in the Body

- Headache
- Jaw clenching
- Grinding teeth
- Trembling of lips, hands
- Neck ache, back pain
- Tension
- Dizziness
- Faintness
- Ringing, or buzzing
- Blushing, sweating
- Cold/sweaty hands, feet
- Clenched fists
- Dry mouth
- Goose bumps
- Heartburn
- Stomach pain, nausea
- Difficulty breathing
- Frequent sighing
- Chest pain
- Palpitations, rapid pulse
- Other: unique to you: _____

8

Recognizing Your Stress

Stress also effect how we react to situations and people

You may find yourself:

- Anxious
- Irritated
- Easy to anger

Over the next week – pay attention when you feel stressed

- Note
 - Physical reactions
 - Emotional & mental reactions

When chronic stress becomes part of your life it becomes the new “normal” and you stop recognizing it as a stress reaction.

Stress in the Mind

- Sadness
- Apathy
- Anxiety, worry
- Irritable
- Anger
- Trouble concentrating
- Drinking too much
- Smoking
- Other: unique to you

9

Mindful Breathing

Evidence based

Sends a message to your body to relax and be calm

Slowing down your breathing

- Your heart rate and breathing slows
- blood pressure & oxygen use decreases
- less stress hormone is released

In a moment we will do an exercise that will ask you to slowly breath in for a count of 5, and then breath out for a count of 5.

If you have any breathing problems (like asthma) or other health conditions that make you uncomfortable doing this, **please don't push yourself.**

If you get lightheaded, stop immediately!

10

Mindful Breathing: A Time-Out From Stress

Step 1: Observe

- Get comfortable
- Close your eyes
- Just observe your breath for a couple of breaths

Step 2: Slow

- Do a slow inhale via the nose for a count of 5
- Then a slow exhale via the mouth for a count of 5

Step 3: Deep

- Place one hand on your abdomen
- Feel it expand as you inhale
- Contract as you exhale.

Step 4: Focus

- Difficulties focusing?
- Add a word or phrase as you inhale and exhale

Step 5: Practice

- Start with 5 breaths
- Gradually increase practice time to 10 breaths

11

Calibrating

- Measuring the success of this tool requires one more step
- Most scales ask you to rate your stress from 1 to 10 before and after the mindful breathing
- But unless you calibrate a tool it will be imprecise and can be influence by many things

Calibrating Your Stress Rating

Think of a moment when you are not at all stressed – vividly picture it in your mind.
Select one or two words to remind you and write that next to Not at All Stressed.

Now think of a moment when you were terribly stressed
Select a word for that. Place it next to Terribly Stressed.

Now think of something in the middle
Select a word and place it next to Moderately stressed.

This means every time you do a stress rating you are reminding yourself of your personalized stress rating scale so you accurately ranking your stress level.

12

Relaxation Diary

Practice Record 1.2: Mindful Breathing

Relaxation Diary: Stress Evaluation

Please rate your stress level from 1 to 10 in this moment: _____

1 = Not at all stressed _____
 5 = Moderately stressed _____
 10 = Terribly stressed _____

DATE	STRESS	COMMENTS (why I felt this way, etc.)
	Before: _____ After: _____	
	Before: _____ After: _____	
	Before: _____ After: _____	
	Before: _____ After: _____	
	Before: _____ After: _____	
	Before: _____ After: _____	
	Before: _____ After: _____	
	Before: _____ After: _____	

Practice Record 1.2: Mindful Breathing

Activity: Mindful Breathing

Stress Rating Before Exercise
Please rate your stress level from 1 to 10 in this moment: _____
1 = Not at all stressed _____
5 = Moderately stressed _____
10 = Terribly stressed _____

Instructions for Mindful Breathing (do at least 10 breaths)

- Find a comfortable seat
- Take a deep slow breath in through your nose for a count of 5
- Feel your abdomen expand as you do this
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of 5
- Breathe in again, making every breath slow and steady and exactly like the one before it

If You are Unable to Practice This Method of Mindful Breathing:
Alternatives can be found at www.optimalagingcenter.com/bright. Please select one you can do and complete the Relaxation Diary using that method.

Stress Rating After Exercise
How would you rate your stress level now? _____

Questions to Explore

1. Did your level of stress change?
2. What was this experience like for you?
3. Can you think of a specific event when this technique might have been helpful during a stressful caregiving situation?

13

Power of Balance

- Caregiving has its many stressors, yes, but there are also positive aspects that make the process rewarding and fulfilling – if we pay attention to them.
- Achieving a balance between those two domains (positive and negative components of caregiving) fosters caregivers’ mental health.

How can we achieve that balance?

14

Power of Balance



Gratitude	Kind Act	Forgiveness
Giving Thanks	Doing for Others & for Oneself	Forgiving Oneself & Your Care Recipient
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps us to focus on the good things that are there in the situation Encourages us to feel positive emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps you feel good about yourself Reminds you to take care of yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves your mood – holding on to anger/hurt/ disappointment really hurts the person who can't let go

15

Power of Balance (PR 1.3: Power of Balance)

Two minutes a day for 21 days in a row

- Write down 3 things:
 - A Gratitude: something you give thanks for
 - A Kind Act: something nice you've done for someone
 - An Act of Forgiveness
- Review at the end of each week

Practice Record 1.3: Power of Balance

Power of Balance

Gratitude

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

Kind Act

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

Act of Forgiveness

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

□ _____ □ _____

16

Take Away

- Stress affects our life in many ways, some of them unexpected.
- Everyone shows stress in different ways and it is important to know your own signals and pay attention to them.
- Mindful breathing works best if it is practiced often.
- Rewiring your brain to look for the positives in your caregiving situation can increase your sense of well-being.
- Specific practices can help you rewire your brain, if you do them regularly

17

Home Practice: Making It Work for You



Skill 1: Power of Balance

Write down 3 things:

- A Gratitude: something you give thanks for
- A Kind Act: something nice done for someone or for yourself
- An Act of Forgiveness: clearing the slate
- Review at the end of each week

Skill 2: Relaxation Diary/Mindful Breathing

- For 7 days, once a day practice your mindful breathing
- Start with 5 breaths and gradually work up to 10 breaths
- Do a stress rating before and after each practice.
- Use this technique particularly when you are stressed over caregiving.

18



See you next week!

Do you have any questions?

Dolores Gallagher Thompson, PhD, ABPP
dolorest@stanford.edu

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