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## Building Community

- 

**TIME**  
90 minutes long  
May need to interrupt
- 

**PARTICIPATION**  
Is voluntary but,  
Best way to learn
- 


**PRIVACY**  
Said in the group,  
Stays in the group
- 

**SURROUNDINGS**  
Check screen visibility,  
Reduce noise
- 

**IF DUTY CALLS**  
Leave to do what you need  
Come back when you can

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## Introductions



Your Name

Who you are caring for and their diagnosis

One thing you hope to learn from this workshop

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## Today's Topics



Stress & Caregiving



Recognizing Stress



Relaxation Skills

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## Stress & 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

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## Stress

### Your body's response to threat

- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental

### Stress can be:

- Acute: over quickly
- Chronic: lasting a long time
- Can be growth promoting

### Chronic stress affects us:

- Physically
- Psychologically
- Socially

Breathe faster to increase  
O<sub>2</sub> levels in blood

Heartbeat increases – constricting  
blood vessels & diverting oxygen  
enriched blood to large muscles

Liver produces extra glucose  
to give a boost of energy

Digestive system is interrupted with  
increase in stomach acid

Muscles tighten to minimize  
damage if injured

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## Consequences of Chronic Stress

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	SOCIAL
health related	emotional/mental	relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high blood pressure</li> <li>• heart problems</li> <li>• increased chance to catch colds and flu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• depression / anxiety</li> <li>• anger / irritation</li> <li>• changes in appetite</li> <li>• sleep problems</li> <li>• lack of energy</li> <li>• hopelessness / helplessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• withdraw</li> <li>• may feel like burden</li> <li>• increases loneliness</li> <li>• friends and family can drift away</li> </ul>

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## Your Stress Signs

Everyone reacts to stress differently

Need to know your signs so you know when to react

- Think about a recent stressful experience
- Scan your body – where are you experiencing that stress?
- Use the handout to learn what your stress signs are

Over the next week

Pay attention to your stress signs

- 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
- Sadness
- Apathy
- Anxiety, worry
- Irritable
- Anger
- Trouble concentrating
- Drinking too much
- Smoking

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## Dealing with Stress: Deep Breathing

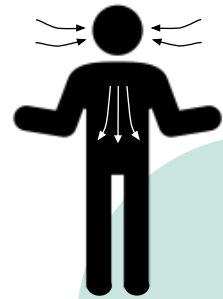
### Proven method to calm down and reduce stress

- Sends a message to your body to relax and be calm
- Slowing down your breathing
- Your heart rate and breathing slows
- Gives you space to respond rather than react

### Daily practice

- Start with 10 breathes
- Use during a stressful caregiving situation

Goal is to have it be second nature to you so you don't need to think about it, just use it when you find yourself in a stressful situation



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

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

If you get lightheaded, stop immediately!

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## Deep Breathing Guide

Giving you space to respond rather than react

STEP 1: WATCH	Get comfortable and close your eyes Just feel your breath for a couple of breaths
STEP 2: SLOW	Breath in through your nose for a count of 5, pause Breath out through your mouth for a count of 5
STEP 3: DEEP	Put your hand on your stomach Feel your hand rise as you breath in and fall as you breath out
STEP 4: FOCUS	Difficulties focusing? Add a word as you breath in and another as you breath out
STEP 5: PRACTICE	Practice every day Take 10 breaths

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## Dealing with Stress: Visualization

Visualization is a way to help you to take a break from stress

- It involves imagining yourself in a peaceful and safe place where you feel relaxed, happy, and secure

Daily practice

- Works best if you practice it daily, until it becomes second nature

Goal is to have it be second nature to you, so you don't need to think about it just use it when you find yourself in a stressful situation



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## Visualization Guide

Imagine a place where you can feel calm, peaceful and safe. It may be a place you've been to before, somewhere you've dreamt about going, or maybe somewhere you've seen a picture of.

Focus on the **COLORS** in your peaceful safe place.

Now notice the **SOUNDS** that are around you, or perhaps the silence.

Think about any **SMELLS** you notice there.

Then focus on any skin **SENSATIONS** - the earth beneath you, the temperature, movement of air, anything you can touch.

While you are in your peaceful and safe place, you might choose to give it a name, whether one word or a phrase that you can use to bring this image back, anytime you need to.

You can choose to linger there a while, just enjoying the peacefulness and serenity.

You can leave whenever you want to, just by opening your eyes and being aware of where you are now.

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## 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.
- Deep breathing & visualization works best if it is practiced often.

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## Making This Work for You

Pick One



Daily practice of deep breathing  
(start at 10 breaths)



Daily practice of visualization  
(5 mins daily)

Set a Deadline

Be realistic in  
your deadline.

Why this one?

How will this  
help you?

What will you  
pair it with?

Do it with  
something you  
already do.


Optional  
Break it Down

Take large  
tasks & break  
it into steps.

Reminders

Phone Alarms  
Post-Its  
Tape to Mirror

Run into Problems  
Getting it Done?

 ID the issue  
Brainstorm solutions  
Try it out

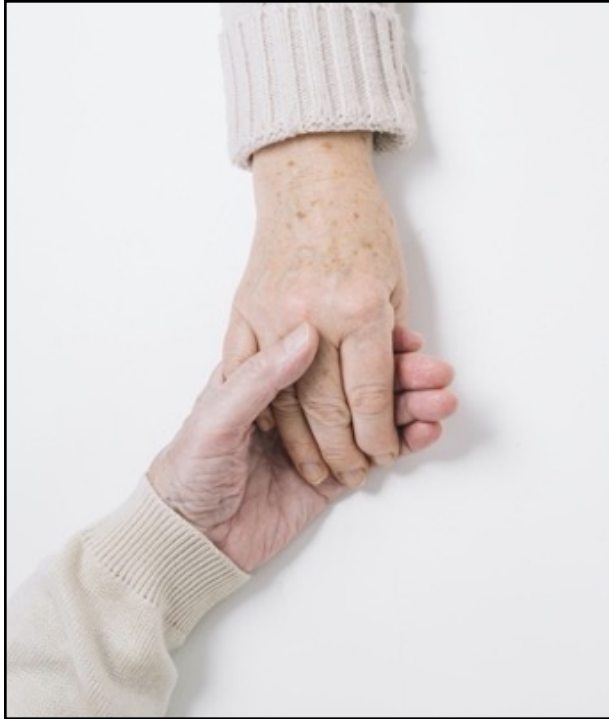
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Before  
you leave,  
Please  
complete  
our poll.



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## **Thank You!**

Do you have any questions?

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