

Stress Management



Did you know...

- **Some stress is healthy but** prolonged stress is not.
- **Stress affects our thoughts** such as forgetfulness, fear of failure, inability to concentrate, low self-esteem, worrying about the future...
- **Accepting reality reduces stress and helps us to** peacefully recognize the truth of a situation, evaluate situations more appropriately, and act more effectively.

A caregiver's patience is tried every single day.

You can't avoid stress but there are ways to manage it! It's a choice you can make!

Stress management = Health wellness!

The Big 3

1. Anger - Caregivers are plagued with anger and frustration; however, it's important to remember that

the anger is not directed toward the loved one. It's directed at the change that has come into your lives from the time of the diagnosis or disability.

2. Guilt - Guilt creeps in for many reasons. . . having to place a parent or spouse in a nursing facility, fear of failing your loved one, having to ask for help.

3. Depression - 40%-70% of family caregivers have clinically significant symptoms of depression with approximately a quarter to half of these caregivers meeting the diagnostic criteria for major depression.

Zarit, S. (2006) Assessment of Family Caregivers: A Research Perspective

Instant Stress Busters!

Healthy coping strategies

1. Count to 10

Before you do or say something you'll regret, step or look away for a moment to collect yourself, count to 10 and take some slow deep breaths.

2. Deep Breathing

Eases tension, causing you to feel more relaxed almost instantly. Inhale through your nose. Pull the air down deep into the lungs. Hold breath for a count of six. Exhale slowly through the mouth to the count of six. (If dizzy or light-headedness occurs, begin breathing naturally.)

3. Humor

Laughter is a release for physical and emotional stress. Laughter produces endorphins, the natural stress fighters, which can change our perspective, shifts our biochemistry in a way which allows and promotes very deep healing, and gives you the courage and strength to find new sources of meaning and hope.

4. JOYERCISE Exercise

Exercise - lowers the level of adrenaline and produces endorphins for an overall good feeling. Even a few minutes of exercise can make a huge difference for this JOY-injector!

- **Stretching** - releases tension and gives muscles flexibility and strength to resist injury.

- **Walking** - normalizes blood sugar/pressure, lowers stress hormones, and offers energy.

5. Meditation/Prayer

Brings soothing comfort, a deep sense of safety and peace regardless of the circumstance, and reminds us we are never alone.

Caregivers juggle multiple roles and are often the lifeline for those whom they care for. While caring for others is highly demanding, it can be extremely rewarding and is critically important.

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Other Stress Busters!

A. Anger management

Anger management can make the difference between illness and health. One key of how to deal with anger is not to repress it or “stuff it.” Talk to a trusted friend/counselor, squeeze a stress ball or clay, scream into a pillow, wad up paper and throw it away.

B. Begin Journaling

Journaling allows you to vent your feelings and frustrations and frees your mind. You may discover an insight or solution to whatever is bothering you.

Keeping a medical notebook is very important to keep important notes about your loved one’s doctor appointments, medicines prescribed, phone numbers of doctors, dates, etc.

C. Calming Massage

Professional massages increase your energy, provide deep relaxation, and calms the overstressed mind. There are also many simple self-massaging techniques you can use to relieve stress.

D. Develop a Support System

Talk to a trusted friend or counselor. Laugh, cry, and express your

feelings when you need to.

Join a caregiver support group. Support is not a luxury. Support is necessary for survival!

E. Exhausted? Ask for Help

Do not feel guilty when you ask for help. Getting help shows wisdom, not weakness. Learn to delegate. Exhaustion will lead to feeling there is nothing left to give and no life beyond caregiving.

F. Focus on Attitude

If you can’t escape a stressful situation the best way to cope is to accept things as they are. Do not dwell on the negative. Positive thinking is used to create positive affirmations which neutralize the negative and help build your self-confidence.

G. Get Enough Rest and Sleep.

Getting sufficient sleep is an invaluable investment. Sleep is a big contributor to how we feel and react. Our bodies have a chance to recharge repair and rejuvenate.

H. Healthy - Nutritious Foods and Snacks

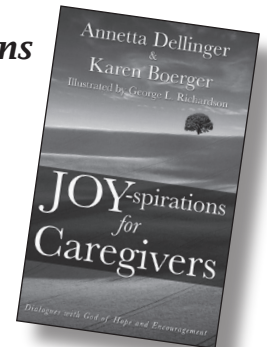
Stress relief foods contain the vital nourishment required to build strong healthy bodies. With strength and health we can respond to life’s challenges more easily.

Dark chocolate contains potent antioxidant qualities not found in other chocolates. Eat in moderation.

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else.”

Charles Dickens

JOY-spirations for Caregivers



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Need a Speaker?

To invite Karen and/or Annetta to speak to your group, email joy4caringhearts@gmail.com or joyannetta@aol.com.

These pages are guidelines. It is always wise to consult with a trained health care professional for appropriate recommendations for your situation.