Promoting Resilience as a Foundation of Wellness

Ann Breen, MN, RN, OCN
Tammy Weitzman, MSW, LICSW
Outline and Aims for today

- Bill of Rights
- Stages and States of Caregiving – emotional and practical
- Assessment tools and characteristics of burnout
- Traits and tools of resilience
- Impact of Family/Friends on the caregiver experience
- Crowdsourcing wisdom
- Building Caregiver wellness
- Doable TO GO plan
- Resources – handouts, videos, references
Caregiver Bill of Rights

I have the right to:

• Care for myself.
• Seek help from others.
• Express difficult feelings.
• Reject any attempt to cause guilt.
• Take pride in what I am doing.
• Protect my individuality.
• Maintain parts of my own life.
• Receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance.
Practical Stages of Caregiver Journey – Not time based

- New – eager to do it all perfectly
- Entrenched – in the middle of all the overwhelming details
- Pragmatic – get it done, less than perfectly
- Transitioning – letting go of the role
- Moving forward – moving to a place of comfort with the past
Emotional States of Caregiving

• Confusion
• Realization
• Frustration
• Collapse
• Acknowledgment
• Acceptance of situation and limitations
When you get it from all sides

- Family
- Friends
Factors that have a negative impact on the caregivers’ stress level

- Repetitive negative thoughts about one’s self
- Rumination
- Isolation
- Low self-esteem
- Perfectionism
- Other responsibilities
- Multiple roles
Caregiving impacts all types of wellness

- Physical
- Social
- Emotional
- Financial
- Spiritual
Where are you on the resource/demand ratio?
Caregiver Simple Check-in

- I feel rested, calm and gentle with myself and others.
- I am getting enough sleep.
- I have someone to talk to.
- I am eating right.
- I am exercising regularly.
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Caregiver Self-Assessment Questionnaire

During the past week or so, I have...

1. Had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing ____________
   Yes No
2. Felt that I couldn't have a normal home life ____________
   Yes No
3. Had difficulty making decisions ____________
   Yes No
4. Felt completely overwhelmed ____________
   Yes No
5. Felt useful and needed ____________
   Yes No
6. Felt lonely ____________
   Yes No
7. Been upset that my relative has changed so much from his/her
   former self ____________
   Yes No
8. Felt a lot of pressure and/or personal time ____________
   Yes No
9. Been depressed ____________
   Yes No
10. Had sleep disturbed because of caring for my relative ____________
    Yes No
11. Had a crying spell(s) ____________
    Yes No
12. Felt strained, between work and family responsibilities ____________
    Yes No
13. Had back pain ____________
    Yes No
14. Felt ill (headache, queasiness, problems with common cold) ____________
    Yes No
15. Been satisfied with the support I've received from my family ____________
    Yes No
16. Found my relative's living situation to be inconvenient or a barrier to care ____________
    Yes No
17. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very stressful" to 10 being "very enjoyable," please rate your current level of stress ____________
18. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very healthy" to 10 being "very ill," please rate your current health compared to what it was this time last year ____________

What are characteristics of caregiver burnout?

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- Feeling blue, irritable, hopeless, and helpless
- Changes in appetite, weight, or both
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Getting sick more often
- Feelings of wanting to hurt yourself or the person for whom you are caring
- Emotional and physical exhaustion
- Excessive use of alcohol and/or sleep medications
- Self-neglect
What does resilience look like?

• Calm and emotional awareness
• Support
• Flexible
• Humor
• Peaceful
• Perspective
Self check-in as move to crowdsourcing

- What stage am I at?
- Where am I on the self-assessment scales?
Crowdsourcing Wisdom: Sharing tips

• Talk with one another and come up with one suggestion that helped you and may help another person. What has not worked? (Sticky Notes)
• Report back to the group and share what works and what does not.
Characteristics of Healthy Coping

- Connectiveness – less isolation
- Flexibility
- Economic resources
- Decisive actions
- Meaning and sense of purpose
Traits of Resilience (see handout)

- Emotional awareness
- Perseverance
- Internal sense of control
- Support
- Humor
- Perspective
Tools for Building Resilience and Grounding

- Slow down, relaxation, mediation
- Check in with yourself over coffee, prayer, looking at nature daily
- Appreciation for positives in life – 3 good things
- Find pockets of restorative time
- Offer yourself compassion
- Changing perspective
More Foundational Work

• Identify barriers
• Identify your boundaries (see next slides)
• Set goals
• Seek solutions
• Communicate constructively
• Ask and accept help
• Work collaboratively with the medical team/s (Family Caregiver Alliance)
Boundaries: what are they? (reference slide)

Boundaries are guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates to identify for themselves what are reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave around them and how they will respond when someone steps outside those limits. Boundaries are not rules for someone else to follow.

Sometimes they'll be described in terms of "your stuff<---//--->my stuff." But what does that mean? It means the ability to recognize what is our responsibility (and what is truly within our power to control) and what isn't. Boundaries are an essential ingredient to creating a healthy self. They define the relationship between you and everyone else around you.
Healthy boundaries help us to create our own destiny. They ensure that we are taking responsibility for our own lives; that we knowingly accept the consequences and/or reap the benefits of our choices. And, just as importantly, they ensure that we let others do the same for themselves.

A key to boundaries is knowing your inner self: your beliefs, desires, needs, and intuitions.
Emotional Hygiene

• Offer yourself emotional first aid
• Stop rumination – distract yourself (e.g., audiobooks, podcasts, Ted talks)
• Protect your self-esteem
• Take action
• Reach out to others to lessen loneliness and burden
Social, Emotional Self-care

- Meditation
- Affirmation – I am calm and doing the best I can
- Check in with yourself
- Talk to safe person/s
- Journals
Suggestions for Relaxation

• Deep breathing
• Meditations on YouTube
• 3 good things practice
• Videos
• Audiobooks
Physical Self-care

- Exercise
- Healthcare follow-up
- Nutrition
- Sleep hygiene
Spiritual Connection
Financial and Legal Health

- Check with a social worker
- Organizations
- Request assistance if needed
- Address medical power of attorney, wills
Self-care Plan TO GO

• Know thy self
• What are 1-3 simple changes you can make?
• Examples: gratitude (3 good things), deep breathing, walking, healthcare appointments, call a friend
• How will you deal with the barriers and know your boundaries?
Caregiver Series Flyer

Caring for the Caregiver Series

Come to learn, share, and discuss the caregiver experience. The Caring for the Caregiver Series will touch on different topics and strategies for taking care of yourself while caring for your loved one.

Communicating Constructively
Thursday, June 13th at 1pm
Room 1008 (1st floor)

Future Topics
Impact of Family and Friends on Caregivers

If you cannot attend in person, but still want to join the meeting, please conference call in at (877) 369-0926 or (408) 638-0968. Meeting ID: 208 307 2502.

Questions? Feel free to call Ann Breen (206) 306-2125 or Tammy Weitzman (206) 305-1083.
Compassionate Meditation

“May you be well, may you live in peace – yourself, a loved one, a challenging individual”
Meditation of Loving Kindness: may you be calm, live in peace

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d_AA9H4z9U
Videos on Emotional Health

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2hc2FLOdhI
Compassion Fatigue for Caregivers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7keppA8XRas
Articles of Interest

• https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/31-tips-boost-your-mental-health
• https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/women-s-mental-health-matters/201510/9-ways-you-can-improve-your-mental-health-today
• https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers/Taking
• https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/05/05/719780061/from-gloom-to-gratitude-8-skills-to-cultivate-joy?utm_source=instagram.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20190506
Resources

• National Cancer Institute  1-800-4-CANCER (422-6237)
  http://www.cancer.gov

• Facing Forward - Life After Cancer Treatment

• When Someone You Love is Being Treated for Cancer
  www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping/when-someone-you-love-is-treated

• Taking Time: Support for People with Cancer
  http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/takingtime
Resources

• National Institute on Aging
• So Far Away - Twenty Questions and Answers about Long-Distance Caregiving
• Guide for Family Caregivers in Cancer
• Caring for the Caregiver
  www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping/caring-for-the-caregiver
• When Someone You Love is Being Treated for Cancer
  www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/cancerlibrary/ebooks/when-someone-you-love-is-being-treated
• Employment Rights Cancer and the Americans with Disabilities Act
  www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/cancer.cfm
• The Job Accommodation Network
  http://askjan.org
• UW Medicine Virtual Clinic
  https://virtualclinic.uwmedicine.org/#/home  1-855-520-5250
References

• Caregiver.com
  www.caregiver.com
• Family Caregiver Alliance
  www.caregiver.org
• Lotsa Helping Hands
  www.lotsahelpinghands.com
• Well Spouse Foundation
  www.wellspouse.org
• Personal Websites to Communicate with Friends and Family
  www.caringbridge.org/
  www.carepages.com/
• Organizing Help from Family and Friends
  www.mealtrain.com
  http://www.standwith.com
Packet

- Assessment
- Emotional Resilience
- Prescription
- Companion Guide
- Bookmark