Social Isolation and Well-Being for Caregivers during Covid-19

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Covid and Caregiving Challenges

• Juggling multiple roles – working from home and caregiving
• Finances – lost income
• Challenging behaviors and small spaces
• Lack of control
• Uncertainty
Stress Warning Signs

**Cognitive**
- Memory problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor judgement
- Anxious thoughts
- Constant worry

**Physical**
- Aches & Pains
- Diarrhea/Constipation
- Chest pain/rapid heartbeat
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds

**Emotional**
- Agitation/unable to relax
- Moodiness
- Short tempered/irritable
- Depression/unhappiness
- Feeling overwhelmed

**Behavioral**
- Eating more/less
- Sleeping too much/too little
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Using Alcohol/Cigarettes/Drugs
- Nervous habits like nail biting etc
Building Resilience

...the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress

- Embrace healthy thoughts
- Build your connections
- Find purpose
- Seek help
- Foster wellness
“You can’t control the situation, but you need to think clearly to understand how to navigate it.”

What One Woman Learned After Caring For Her Husband Through Lung Cancer
Managing Anxious Thoughts

• Change unhelpful thought patterns
  – Avoid overgeneralizing and thinking in “should”
  – Write down automatic thoughts

• Control what you can
  – Practice safe behaviors

• Limit your news consumption

• Talk to a therapist or counselor
  – Telehealth
Guilt

• “I should....”
  – Stop them from going outside
  – Not get frustrated/stay patient
  – Be able to get all my work done
  – Visit more to make sure they’re ok

• Being “perfect” is a set up for failure

• Guilt vs Regret
Isolation

• Feelings of abandonment
  – Is anyone stepping up to help?
• Not knowing how/who to ask for help
  – Are there any community resources?
• Family conflict
  – Is everyone on the same page?
• Loss of social supports
  – Not able to see friends/family/coworkers
Building Connections

• Video chat with friends & family
• Online support groups – many now offered online
  – www.caregiver.org
  – www.alzconnected.org
  – Facebook caregiver groups
• Community/senior center classes
Grief and Loss

“\text{When you have any kind of change, you often have loss, and when you have loss, you have grief.}”

\text{~ J. Shep Jeffreys}

\text{Helping Grieving People}
Grief and Loss

• Anticipatory Grief
  – What happens if they don’t practice safe behaviors?

• Ambiguous Loss
  – What’s changed?
  – What’s the same?
“Acceptance, as you might imagine, is where the power lies. We find control in acceptance. *I can wash my hands. I can keep a safe distance. I can learn how to work virtually.*” ~ David Kessler

https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief?utm_source=pocket-newtab
Being Proactive

• Legal Documents
  – Advance Health Care Directive
  – POLST/MOLST

• Personal Health Records
  – Medication lists, doctor information, health history

• Telehealth
  – Primary Care
  – Mental Health Support
Community Resources

• Crisis Services
  – Adult Protective Services
  – Disaster Distress Helpline – 800.985.5990
  – Alzheimer’s Association Helpline (dementia) 800.272.3900
  – Friendship Line (older adults) – 800.971.0016

• Community Services
  – In California, Caregiver Resource Centers
  – Eldercare Locator – connections to services for older adults and adults with disabilities 800.677.1116
Keeping Busy and Connected

- **Well Connected** – phone based activities for older adults
- **Alzheimer’s Store** – activity ideas and products
- **Time Slips** – creative engagement
- Friendly Visitor Calls – volunteer programs in your area
- **Caring Bridge** – engage family/friends in care
- **Virtual national park, museum tours, aquariums**
Activities That Foster Wellness

- Exercise
- Play with a pet
- Gardening
- Reading
- Music
- Humor
- Relaxation exercises
- Journaling
- Yoga
- Spiritual practices
Family Caregiver Alliance is a public voice for caregivers, illuminating the daily challenges they face, offering them the assistance they so desperately need and deserve, and championing their cause through education, services, research and advocacy.

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Social Media Channels:
Facebook
Twitter
YouTube
LinkedIn

• FCA established the National Center on Caregiving (NCC), to advance the development of high-quality, cost effective programs and policies for caregivers in every state in the country. The NCC sponsors the Family Care Navigator, a state-by-state resource locator designed to help caregivers locate support services in their communities.

• FCA also operates the Bay Area Caregiver Resource Center in the six-county San Francisco Bay Area. The staff of family counselors works closely with families caring for ill or elderly loved ones. Our services, education programs and publications are developed to offer these families direct support, vital information, and effective tools to manage the complex and demanding tasks of caregiving.