

# CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER

April 2022

## Mindfulness and Managing Stress

Caretaking a loved one can be very stressful and looking after a person who is older and living with Alzheimer's, dementia, recovering from a stroke, or managing mobility issues can be especially overwhelming. That is why it is so vital to engage mindfulness and other stress-reducing practices when you are a carepartner.

What exactly is Mindfulness? Mindfulness is developing **a moment-by-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens**. Just reading that definition feels inspiring—if a bit aspirational. Most people who are in caretaking mode, can't imagine stopping down for a cup of coffee, much less developing an entire mindfulness practice. Go easy and develop these practices slowly over time. People who caretake others often have a generous spirit, at times even generous to a fault. Start to build some of these practices into your daily routine and before you know it, you will be living more mindfully, and the subsequent payoff should be a profound reduction in overall stress.

### Mindfulness activities that are fun and somewhat easy to do

#### THE NAME GAME

How to do it: First, look around you and name three things you can hear, then two things you can see, and finally one sensation that you feel.

How it works: this exercise is grounding and increases both awareness of body and environment.

#### DEEP BREATHING

How to do it: Long, deep breathing, in through the nose, out through the mouth. Or try boxed breathing—breathe in for four counts, hold for four counts and breathe out for four counts.

How it works: long, deep breaths will help with focus, de-escalation and grounding and serves to relax the nervous system and draws the attention to the present moment, which in turn promotes a feeling of calm in the body, mind, and spirit.

#### CANDLE STUDY

How to do it: Choose a candle, maybe one that is a favorite scent. Clear your mind of all thoughts, light the candle and stare at the flame. Watch it flicker, watch the colors dance.

How it works: this brings about a meditative state, letting thoughts pass by without control or judgment.

#### MINDFUL EATING AND DRINKING

How to do it: Eat a bowl of strawberries and really take the time to take in each berry, notice the texture, the sweetness, take time to slow down each bite. Do the same as you sip a mug of hot tea—smell the aroma, feel the temperature of the mug, slowly take sips of the hot tea.

How it works: this technique calms the nervous system, regulates digestion, clears the mind. This is an especially good technique for people who eat emotionally in times of stress.

*Other activities that cult mindfulness,  
bring about a meditative state & help to de-stress:*

- ◆ Experiencing a sound-bath (live or a YouTube version)
- ◆ A warm bath with essential oils
- ◆ Lying on a blanket on the grass and staring up at the sky
- ◆ Yoga or Tai Chi (sets for both are available for free on YouTube)
- ◆ Chanting
- ◆ A brisk walk while listening to a mix of favorite songs
- ◆ Watching a favorite comfort-film you've already watched a dozen times
- ◆ Gardening
- ◆ A nature-hike
- ◆ Organizing a cluttered drawer
- ◆ Knitting, needlepoint, any kind of crafting activity
- ◆ Writing a gratitude list or journaling



**Anything can be turned into a mindfulness exercise when we slow down our reactive thinking, make a cognitive decision to detach, and allow ourselves to step away from worry and stress!**

**A quick and easy recipe for a sweet treat**

Peanut-Butter Chocolate Treats (Gluten Free)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Mix 1 cup peanut-butter, ½ cup sugar, 1 egg

Mix well and shape into a ball, then spread into a large cookie on nonstick cookie sheet

Bake for 11 minutes and remove from oven

Sprinkle chocolate chips over the top and when melted spread the chips like frosting

When cool, cut into pieces



*On behalf of ONEgeneration, may you and your loved ones have a ~*



*Joyous Passover*

*Blessed Ramadan*

*Happy Easter*