

Respite Now: Self-care for the Caregiver

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Disclosures

- We both practice and teach yoga.
- Derik is a professional body worker.
- Otherwise, we have no financial interest related to this presentation.

Overview

- Introductions
- Objectives
- Background: Importance of self-care for caregivers
- Self-care activities
- Barriers to self-care
- Chair yoga
- Deep relaxation, self-massage, body awareness
- Group discussion/adding self-care to daily life

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will . . .

1. Be aware of the importance of self-care in maintaining health and well-being and be familiar with tools and resources to support self-care.
2. Have a sequence of chair yoga poses you can use to relax any time.
3. Have learned techniques for meditation and self-massage.

Background: Impact of caregiving

Caregiver Mental Health

- 40-70% clinically significant symptoms of depression (Zarit)
- Increased stress levels (Pinquart)
- Exhaustion (Center on aging)
- Cognitive impact of stress (Vitaliano 2005)
 - a. short-term memory
 - b. attention
 - c. verbal IQ

Impact of caregiving on caregiver physical health

- Nearly twice as many caregivers report fair or poor health status, had a chronic condition, or a disability (60% v. 33%, Ho)
- Caregivers have nearly twice the rate of serious illness (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, arthritis) (45% v. 24%, Ho)
- Increased stress hormones (Vitaliano 2003)
- Decreased immune response (Vitaliano 2003)

References

See Family Caregiver Alliance fact sheet on Caregiver Health
(http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=1822)

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Self-care can mediate these effects

- Meditation can decrease both physiologic (e.g. cortisol) and cognitive (e.g. memory) effects of stress (Mohan)
- Meditation can improve depression and burden in family caregivers of patients with dementia. (Hurley)
- Yoga has been shown to decrease depression and anxiety and improve quality of life for families of neurologic inpatients. (Umadevi)
- A short course of yogic meditation (12 min daily x 8 weeks) can decrease expression of genes related to inflammation. (Black)

References

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Put on your own oxygen mask first!



Self-care brainstorm

How do you care for yourself?



Examples of self-care

- *Yoga
- *Meditation
- *Running
- *Swimming
- *Tai chi
- *Pilates
- *Boxing
- *Dance
- *Singing
- *Prayer
- *Religious community
- *Playing sports on a team
- *Cooking
- *Reading
- *Sewing
- *Fishing
- *Going to the movies
- *Eating at a restaurant
- *Taking a bubble bath
- *Playing music
- *Vacationing
- *Going to a museum
- *Spending time alone
- *Spending time with loved ones

Self-care brainstorm

What gets in the way of self-care?



Barriers

- * Lack of time for self-care

- * Lack of funds

- * Attitudes:

 - Martyr: "I don't deserve it"

 - Defeatist: "It's not going to make a difference anyway."

- * No time to plan self-care activities

- * "I need respite to plan respite"

Self-care: Here, now.



Yoga: Guidelines

- ❖ Any body can do yoga.
- ❖ “If you can breathe, you can do yoga.”
- ❖ Unite breath and body
- ❖ If you need help, ask
- ❖ Listen to your body
- ❖ If anything hurts, stop
- ❖ Be here, now





Chair Yoga Sequence - Warm Up

1. Centering seated; progressive relaxation;
2. Bhastrika = “pulling prana” - energy from air x 40 breaths
3. Single finger stretches
4. Shoulder rolls
5. Seated Eagle pose (R leg over L; R arm under L, twist palms or backs of hands touch)
6. Seated Cat (arched back)-Cow (full belly) and rib rolls (scraping the peanut butter jar)
7. Chair twists (hands to heart center, twist to the left bend forward until right elbow is outside left knee; repeat on other side)
8. Seated forward fold

Standing Poses (or sitting)

1. Tadasana (mountain pose)
2. Urdva hastasana (raised hands pose)
3. Side bends
4. Stretch chest at the wall
5. Half suns (reach up breathing in, fold forward breathing out, flat back breathing in, fold down breathing out, unfurl to standing breathing in & reaching up, bring hands to heart and to the sides while breathing out).

Flow sequence

1. Warrior 2 (front leg bent to 90 degrees toes pointing forward, back leg straight toes angled inward, arms out to the sides)
2. Reverse warrior (back arm reaches toward straight leg, front arm reaches toward ceiling)
3. Extended side angle front arm reaches forward then front elbow rests on bent knee, back arm stretches over head with straight line from foot to fingertips)
4. Triangle (straighten front leg and reach arms straight up and down)
5. Warrior 2

****Half sun flow then repeat on other side ***

Balancing and cool down

1. Tree pose
2. Group Tree pose
3. Seated pigeon (place ankle of right leg resting on left knee, keep right ankle flexed at 90 degrees, sit up very straight then start to hinge at the hips straight forward, possibly starting to reach hands down toward floor; repeat on opposite side)
4. Knee squeeze (squeeze each knee into the chest)
5. Seated twist with chair handles
6. Relaxation (at least 5 min)

Self-administered stress reduction techniques

- Everyone has unique stressors in their lives.
- Holistic theory posits that physical symptoms are the last artifacts to manifest as a result of stress.
- These stressors typically manifest in specific areas of the body.
- Addressing the physical can also provide emotional and psychological relief.

Self-administered Stress Reduction

- Is it necessary to visit a professional to reduce stress in your body?
- What have you done to reduce stress in your body?



Pressure points

- Feet
- Calves
- Lower back
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Head



Meditation

There are no mistakes, only opportunities.



Discussion

- Daily mindfulness practices
- Practicing gratitude

