



Finding the Balance -

Caring for Yourself As You Care for Others

Stressed? What's your "me time" plan?

When a friend is telling you how stressed she feels, do you find yourself thinking "join the club" as you mentally list all the things that need to be done. Caregiving seems to be synonymous with stress. Too many competing needs and responsibilities. And a tendency to put your own at the very bottom of the list.



Sure, you know it is bad for your health and well-being, but taking care of yourself is just one more thing to do. However it is the most important thing to do! Why? Caregivers are at greater risk for chronic illnesses, such as high blood pressure, weakened immune systems, and sleep deprivation.

April is National Stress Awareness Month. So what's your plan to take care of yourself?

As it happens, there is a Caregiving Club (www.caregivingclub.com), an organization with a vision of empowering family caregivers on how to balance self-care with caregiving. Caregiving Club promotes *Me Time Monday*, part of a national movement to have Americans adopt healthy behaviors that prevent chronic illness by starting new activities on Monday, the day people tend to set their intentions for the week.

Plan now to schedule some "me time" on Monday. But whether it's Meditation on Monday or Tai Chi on Tuesday, make time for activities that relax you or lift your spirits. Give yourself permission to take steps to begin reducing your own stress.

"Take care of me" ought not be at the bottom of your "to-do" list.

*Don't judge
each day by the
harvest you reap
but by the seeds
that you plant.*
Robert Louis
Stevenson



Central Vermont
Council on Aging
(CVCOA)
Senior Helpline
1-800-642-5119
www.cvcoa.org

If you prefer to receive
your newsletter by email
or you would like to be
removed from the mail-
ing list, please contact:
Jeanne Kern,
Family Caregiver Support
jkern@cvcoa.org
802/ 476-2671

8 Stress-Busters for Immediate Relief

1. Practice letting go.

When you find yourself becoming angry or annoyed by something trivial, make a conscious choice not to become angry or upset. Don't waste your energy or your thoughts.

2. Breathe slowly & deeply.

Before reacting to a stressful situation, take three deep breaths and let them out slowly.

3. Speak more slowly than usual.

Slow down your speech when you feel overwhelmed to give yourself time to think more clearly. It will help you to react more calmly and reasonably to stressful situations.



4. Choose one simple task you've been putting off & do it.

Return that phone call to your sister. Make that dentist appointment. Just taking care of one small task that has been nagging you can energize you and improve your attitude.



5. Get outdoors.

Rain or shine, summer or winter—a few minutes outside can refresh your spirit.

6. Drink plenty of water & eat small, healthy snacks.

Hunger and dehydration, even before you notice you are hungry and thirsty, can intensify feelings of anxiety and stress.



7. Check your posture.

Poor posture can lead to muscle tension, pain and increased stress. Hold your head and shoulders upright and avoid stooping or slouching.

8. Reward yourself at the end of your stressful day.

Relax with a good book. Watch a movie. Take a bubble bath. Before bedtime take a breather to allow yourself to fully relax. Put aside the chores, don't make plans for tomorrow. Just take a deep breath, relax and recharge.

Give Tai Chi a Try—or Yoga or Meditation

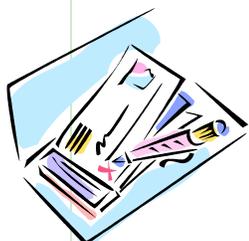


One of the *Me Time Monday* relaxation tips offered by Caregiving Club is to give yoga, tai chi or meditation a try. Both yoga and Tai Chi can lower your blood pressure and improve your posture. They relax your muscles and boost your immune system. Even if you can't squeeze a class into your busy day you can try calm breathing for a few minutes. Dr. Oz advises lying on your back and taking 10 deep breaths a day for a short journey to a less-stressful place. Practicing meditation can help you learn to calm and relax your mind and escape the endless loop of worries that cycle through your thoughts.



Tai Chi, Qi Gong and Yoga are offered at many of our local senior centers. Many of these programs are sponsored by the CVCOA Wellness Program and N2N AmeriCorps. Call your local center for a schedule of activities.

Legal and Financial Planning for Alzheimer's Disease



A free interactive program where you will have a chance to learn about important legal and financial issues to consider, how to put plans in place, and how to access legal and financial resources near you. **This program will cover information for families and individuals dealing with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.**

Topics covered will include:

- Making legal plans that fit your needs
- Legal documents you'll need and what they mean for all of you
- How to find legal and financial assistance
- Practical strategies for making a long-term plan of care
- Tax deductions and credits
- Government programs that can help pay for care

Sponsored by CVCOA; presented by Vermont Alzheimer's Association.

Monday, May 21, 6:00—8:30 pm

Out & About Adult Day Services, 11 Court Street in Morrisville

To register, call the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900 or email Kate.Romm@alz.org.

Is caring for a loved one with dementia challenging? Are you feeling stressed out? Are you looking for better ways to cope or help with problem-solving? Could you use some one-on-one, in-home support? Our REACH OUT program is the answer. CVCOA case managers will provide home and phone visits over a 6-month period focusing on caregiving and stress, relaxation, coping with dementia behaviors, problem-solving techniques and more. Call 476-2671 for more information.



Family Caregiver Support Program
59 N. Main Street, Suite 200
Barre, Vermont 05641

Senior Helpline 1-800-642-5119
Central Vermont Council on Aging - Options for Seniors & Caregivers

Alzheimer's
Association

24/7 helpline

1-800-272-3900



for services
& support

or visit

www.alz.org

for more
information on
caring for a
loved one with
dementia

Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers: Early Stage

A free workshop for those caring for a loved one in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

Topics covered include:

- Developing a care team
- Legal and financial planning
- Coping strategies
- Care and treatment options
- Communicating and connecting
- Maximizing independence



Sponsored by CVCOA; presented by Vermont Alzheimer's Association.

Wednesdays, May 9, 16 & 23, 6:00—8:00 pm

Central Vermont Council on Aging , 59 N. Main Street, Suite 200 in Barre

To register, call the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900
or email Kate.Romm@alz.org.