Coping with the Stress of Caregiving

Celebrating a Second Chance at Life Survivorship Symposium

July 11-17, 2020

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Coping with the Stress of Caregiving

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Introduction

• Overview of stress related to caregiving

• Negative effects of stress

• Three coping strategies

  1. Relaxation
  2. Active coping
  3. Self-care
Are you...

Have you...

Taking care of a loved one

Being taken care of by a loved one

Ever provided care for someone else (a parent, child, friend, spouse)
Congratulations…

…on taking the next hour to focus on

YOU
The *Unmet Needs of Caregivers*

Caregivers have more *unmet* care needs than patients.

Caregivers needs are considered *secondary* or *overlooked*.

We need to *better understand* the needs of caregivers during and after transplant.
A day in the life...

- Personal care
- Mobility
- Transportation
- Communication with supports
- Housework and meal preparation
- Management and coordination of medical care
- Administration of medication and therapies
- Monitoring and managing of side effects
- Emotional support
- Managing finances
- Care for other dependents
- Maintain job or other responsibilities
- Self-care

“I don’t go out with my friends by myself as much as I used to because I don’t want to leave him here by himself.”
When we are stressed

- More susceptible to colds
- More irritable
- More difficulty sleeping
Three Coping Strategies

1. Relaxation
2. Coping by Controllability
3. Intention for Self-care
1. Relaxation Exercises
Stress Response

**Fight or Flight Response**

- Adrenaline
- Cortisol
- Sick
- Inflammation
- Sleep issues
- Stress on body
Relaxation Response

Relaxation Response

- Adrenaline
- Cortisol
- Sick
- Inflammation
- Sleep issues
- Stress on body
Goal:

Activate Relaxation Response

Dampen Stress Response
### Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hands and arms</th>
<th>Face and neck</th>
<th>Chest, shoulders, back</th>
<th>Thighs, calves, feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold arms at a 45-degree angle and make fists.</td>
<td>Raise eyebrows, squint eyes, wrinkle nose, bit down lightly, pull back corners of mouth, and pull head slightly down to chin.</td>
<td>Take a deep breath, hold it in, pull back the shoulders and puff out chest. Careful of back issues.</td>
<td>Lift your feet off of the floor, flex slightly, and turn toes inward.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Coping through Controllability
Two Ways to Cope

- **Action-oriented Coping**
  
  What action can I take to resolve the situation?

- **Emotion-oriented Coping**
  
  If I can’t resolve the situation, what can I do to manage the stress/discomfort?
# Identify controllability: Snowstorm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controllable</th>
<th>Uncontrollable</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stock up on supplies (food, water, batteries, shovel)</td>
<td>The fact that a snowstorm is coming and how much snow there will be</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get a hotel room or stay with a friend closer to work</td>
<td>What areas will get hit the hardest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave early from work to avoid dangerous conditions</td>
<td>Whether there will be power outages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move your car off the street to avoid towing or snow plow damage</td>
<td>Whether there will be road closures and delays in transportation</td>
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**Identify controllability:** Caring for someone

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**Controllable**

**Action-oriented coping**
- What action can I take to resolve the situation?
  - Make a decision
  - Resolve a conflict
  - Seek information or advice
  - Set a goal
  - Engage in problem-solving
  - Request help

**Emotion-oriented coping**
- If I can’t resolve the situation, what can I do to manage the stress/discomfort?
  - Engage in enjoyable activities
  - Relaxation, deep breathing, or massage
  - Acceptance and self-soothing
  - Exercise
  - Listen to or play music
  - Take a walk, bike ride, or other exercise
  - Talk to a friend or relative
  - Write in a journal
  - Change how I think about it

**Uncontrollable**
3. Intention for Self-Care
(break up into small groups)
Intention for Self-Care: 6 Steps

1. What is something I used to like to do?
2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?
3. Do I need to do it differently? Be creative
4. What might get in the way?
5. How will I overcome that obstacle?
6. Make a plan
### Example 1:

1. **What is something I used to like to do?**
   - **Workout at the gym**

2. **Can I incorporate it back into my life?**
   - **Maybe, but not at the gym**

3. **If not, can I do it differently? Be creative**
   - **Take a walk or jog around the neighborhood**

4. **What might get in the way?**
   - **Weather, can’t leave my loved one**

5. **How will I overcome that obstacle?**
   - **Have a backup exercise video at home or on YouTube**

6. **Make a plan**
   - **This week, Tuesday, 30 minute walk in the morning, if raining, YouTube exercise videos and choose one in advance**
Example 2:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. What is something I used to like to do?</strong></td>
<td>Travel to new places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?</strong></td>
<td>No, we cannot feasibly travel right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. If not, can I do it differently? Be creative</strong></td>
<td>Watch a travel show on a country/city and order that country’s cuisine for dinner while we watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. What might get in the way?</strong></td>
<td>Not enough time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. How will I overcome that obstacle?</strong></td>
<td>Block out one night every other week or once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Make a plan</strong></td>
<td>This week, Wednesday night, we will choose a show on Greece and eat food from a Greek restaurant while we watch</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Complete and share with small group

- Take 5 minutes to complete on your own or with your loved one
- Share with friends
- Listen and give feedback to others, help brainstorm
- Set an intention
- Check-in with that person

1. What is something I used to like to do?
2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?
3. Do I need to do it differently? Be creative
4. What might get in the way?
5. How will I overcome that obstacle?
6. Make a plan
## Share your intention:

1. What is something I used to like to do?
2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?
3. If not, can I do it differently? Be creative
4. What might get in the way?
5. How will I overcome that obstacle?
6. Make a plan
Following through…

Set an intention to practice the self-care you identified

Check-in with your partner or friend next week
Summary

1. Relaxation
2. Coping by Controllability
3. Intention for Self-care
Thank you!
Wishing you improved coping.
Questions?

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