VA Caregiver Support

Building on the Small Moments of Self Care
Daily Attention Diary

CAREGIVER SUPPORT LINE
1-855-260-3274

7	Monday- Physical	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
8	Tuesday- Mental	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
9	Wednesday- Emotional	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
10	Thursday- Behavioral	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
11	Friday- Social	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
12	Saturday- Meaning / Nature	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
13	Sunday- Meditation/Visualization	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Physical Wellbeing

Quote: “The five senses are the ministers of the soul.” Leonardo da Vinci

Exercise: Our physical senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, are a gift breathing life into our tired and worn down spirits. They provide a vital source of comfort, inspiration, and joy. Pay close attention appreciating the gift of your senses today, whether taking in the beauty of a landscape, the sound of morning birds or your favorite music, the smell of your garden or cookies baking, the taste of fresh fruit, the touch of a loved one or the warmth of a fire. Your recognition and gratitude for your senses will wash over you and bring healing.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Mental Wellbeing

Quote: "With intellectual curiosity the world will always be full of magic and wonder."

Marjorie Pay Hinckley

Exercise: One of the most overlooked secrets to happiness is cultivating our innate sense of curiosity. Curiosity opens a doorway to unfamiliar experiences, laying the groundwork to experience the joy of discovery. Exercise curiosity intentionally in your daily experiences, transforming routine with attention to seeing a different view. Keep an open mind and try something new. Ask questions. Learn something new, or learn something new about someone. Even those we think we know have hidden treasures if we only inquire. Today loose yourself in the energy and wonder of curiosity.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Emotional Wellbeing

Quote "The walls we build around us to keep the sadness out also keeps out the joy" Jim Rohn

Exercise: Listen to the emotions that surface, notice and name them. Denying, resisting or holding on to your feelings will result in suffering. When we are able to observe, experience, and accept what we feel, we expand our capacity for connection and wise action. So take some time today to notice and name how you may feel. Observe. What contributed to this feeling arising? Did you resist the feeling? Did you try to hold on to it? Did you express it in some way? Did you find it passed like a cloud by taking that slow and conscious breath? What did you learn about yourself from paying attention to your feelings today?

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Behavioral Wellness

Quote: " The essence of pleasure is spontaneity"

Germaine Greer

Exercise: Spontaneity can often be lost meeting the many demands and tasks of your daily life. Spontaneity is the risk of following your heart, taking a chance, doing something new. Listen to your spark of spontaneity. Follow its energy today. Do something you want to do, say something you want to say, try something new, follow your bliss, shake up the routine and wake up to the pleasure of letting yourself go.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Social Connection

Quote: “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” Leo Buscaglia

Exercise: In the routine and taxing demands of Caregiving it is easy to lose sight of the real significance of your individual value and importance in the world. Every time you share your affection, your smile, your care, your efforts, and your gifts, you are contributing your unique lasting and vital influence in the lives of others and in the world. Today remember not to lose sight that what you give is powerful. Take some time to reflect, to reminisce, and to recognize all the many small efforts you have made to live up to your values and contribute to the world around you. Remembering will reinforce your great significance to yourself and to us all.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Seek Meaning

Quote: “Even in darkness it is possible to create light.” Elie Wiesel

Exercise: Out of the darkness of heartache and struggle is born the opportunity for human transformation. While your struggles have torn you down, enduring them has made you strong. In your moments of darkness your truest character shines and your connection to others is forged. How have you made light from your darkness? What loving bonds have you formed when you have shared a struggle with another? How have your heartaches and challenges been transformed into a gift, for you and to those your life has touched? Today reflect on the light.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Meditation/Visualization

Quote: "Attention to the human body brings healing and regeneration. Through awareness of the body we remember who we really are." Jack Kornfield

Exercise: Click on this link to be directed to our VA caregiver Website presentation page. On that page you will find a number of digital recordings. Listen to the Body Scan Relaxation Exercise. (Click on link for recording)

Dimensions of Wellness Stress Relief Activities List

Physical

- Go for a short brisk walk
- Take a deep breath
- Attend a relaxation session
- Try yoga
- Dance
- Stretch
- Go for a bike ride
- Don't skip sleep to get things done
- Take a nap
- Regular Medical Care
- Eat healthy
- Take Time Off
- Acupuncture
- Take a vacation
- Try a Staycation
- muscle relaxation
- Breathing exercises
- Go for a jog
- Do a craft project
- Walk your dogs
- Exercise
- Tai Chi
- Qi gong
- Play with a pet
- Sweat out tension with a good workout
- Get a manicure
- Bake
- Avoid tight clothes
- Cook your favorite dish or meal
- Cook a recipe that you've never tried before
- Go get a haircut
- Go to the movies
- Go for a swim
- Go to a sporting event, like a baseball game
- Go borrow a friend's dog and take it to the park
- Lift weights
- Give your pet a bath
- Do something exciting like surfing, rock climbing, skiing, skydiving, motorcycle riding, or kayaking, or go learn how to do one of these things
- Go to your local playground and join a game being played or watch a game
- Go play something you can do by yourself if no one else is around, like basketball, bowling, handball, miniature golf, billiards, or hitting a tennis ball against the wall
- Paint your nails
- Trim your nails
- Change your hair color
- Sing or learn how to sing
- Play a musical instrument or learn how to play one
- Draw a picture
- Paint a picture with a brush or your fingers
- Drink plenty of water
- Get rest
- Canning
- Pay attention to your breathing

- Get enough sleep
- Snuggle under a cozy blanket
- Take a hot shower
- Get a massage
- Cuddle with a pet
- Kiss
- Get a hot stone massage
- Snuggling with your animals
- Ask a friend for a hug
- Pet a dog/cat
- Take a bubble bath
- Enjoy a glass of wine
- Eat chocolate (it's good for you!) or eat something else you really like
- Eat your favorite ice cream
- Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea
- Burn a scented candle
- Put air freshener in your car
- Book an aromatherapy session
- Bake cookies and let the smell roam your home
- Boil orange slices, water and cinnamon to enhance the smell in your home
- Turn on some loud music and dance
- Make a movie or video
- Take photographs
- Get out of your house, even if you just sit outside

Mental

- Clean out a junk drawer or a closet
- Take action (one small step) on something you've been avoiding
- Try a new activity
- Drive to a new place
- Immerse yourself in a crossword puzzle.
- Do a word search
- Learn how to say no
- Break down large tasks
- Look at problems as challenges
- Look at challenges differently
- Be aware of your decisions
- Look for the silver lining
- Make goals
- Strive for excellence, not perfection
- Stretch your limits
- Have a plan "B"
- Set priorities
- Turn off all electronics
- Organizing/De-cluttering
- Plan short term goals
- Plan long term goals
- Make a Vision Board
- creating a comfortable house that truly is my home
- Get organized
- Strive for good enough, not perfection
- Remember stress is an attitude
- Remember your options
- Sign up for a class that excites you at a local college, adult school or online
- Educate yourself on you loved one's condition
- Watch a ballet
- Watch a comedy program
- Watch a movie
- Watch television
- Listening to music
- Listen to the Radio
- Whistle a tune
- Music therapy
- Enjoy art
- Leave work at work

- Learn something new
- Play solitaire
- Play video games
- Visit your favorite Web sites
- Go shopping
- Do a puzzle with a lot of pieces
- Sell something you don't want
- Create your own Web site
- Knit, crochet, or sew—learn how to
- Make a scrapbook with pictures
- Work on your car, truck, motorcycle or bicycle
- Write a poem, story, movie or play
- Go for a drive in your car or go for a ride on public transportation
- Go to a library
- Learn a new language
- Write a song
- Memorize lines from your favorite movie, play or song
- Read something on a topic you wouldn't normally
- Read your favorite book, magazine or newspaper
- Go to a bookstore and read
- Hum a jingle
- Doodle
- Learn a joke
- Learn a new song
- Go to the mall or the park and watch other people; try to imagine what they're thinking
- Use guided imagery
- Unclutter your life
- Develop a sense of humor
- Plan a trip to somewhere you've never been before
- Go to your favorite café for coffee or tea
- Visit a museum or local art gallery
- Build a support network
- Create your own list of self-care activities
- Sign up for respite

Emotional

- Write your feelings down
- Cry
- Laugh
- Try laughter yoga
- Give yourself affirmations
- Practice self-compassion
- Buy yourself a gift
- Flirt
- Write about things that are bothering you
- Express anger when you need to.
- Seek Counseling
- Forgive others
- Learn to be with and accept your feelings
- Find a "vent" partner
- Be optimistic
- Laugh
- Let go of something
- Foster Self-Forgiveness
- Don't beat yourself up for negative thoughts
- Give yourself permission to feel your feelings and let them go
- Write a loving letter to yourself when you're feeling good and keep it with you to read when you're feeling upset

- Make a list of ten things you're good at or like about yourself and keep it with you to read when you're feeling upset
- Recognize the importance of unconditional love
- Write things you like about yourself on paper
- Schedule "Me" time
- Take a mental health day
- Be gentle with yourself
- Give yourself a break
- Make a list of music you can play when you're feeling upset

Behavioral

- Wake naturally; without an alarm clock
- Get up earlier
- Say "NO" more often
- Delegate some responsibilities
- If someone offers help take it
- Ask for help
- Set appointments
- Engage in small acts of kindness
- Break a bad habit
- Take Time for lunch
- Do not work overtime
- Use all available resources
- Slow down
- Smile
- Say something nice
- Remove yourself from a difficult situation
- Avoid negative people
- Do things in moderation
- Drive a different route to work
- Tell the person who is adding to your stress what they are doing that makes you feel this way.
- Know your limits
- Get help with jobs you dislike
- Get to work earlier
- Scream at a ball game

Social

- Call the Caregiver Support Line
- Go on a lunch date with a good friend.
- Participating in a book club
- Joining a support group
- Volunteer work
- Call a good friend
- Talk to someone
- Meet a friend for coffee
- Teach someone a skill
- Have face-to-face conversations with people
- Say hello to a stranger
- Play with a child
- Go out and visit a friend
- Invite a friend to come to your home
- Text message your friends
- Organize a party
- Play a game with a friend
- Go online to chat
- Join an internet dating site
- Participate in a local theatre group
- Sing in a local choir
- Spend time with family
- Join a group
- Write a letter to a friend or family member

- Call a family member you haven't spoken to in a long time
- Go on a date
- Visit an Animal Shelter
- Praise others

Meaning/Nature

- Attend a religious service
- Light a candle
- Meditate
- Write in a journal
- Spend time in nature
- Pray
- List five things you're grateful for.
- Share your spiritual journey with loved ones, and invite them to discuss their journey with you.
- Name something good that happened today
- Look for grace
- Notice the little miracles
- Put yourself in the environment where you feel connected to God/Higher Power
- Find passion
- Remember what you love
- Recall a peaceful time and imagine actually being there
- Give yourself the assignment of being mindful for 1 day, 1 hour or 1 minute. Really be present. Observe yourself and the events around you and fully participate with your heart.
- Say Thank you
- Volunteer work
- Go to your church, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship
- Write a letter to your higher power
- Read inspiring quotes
- Practice Mindfulness
- Learn who you are
- Figure out what you want in life
- Reflect on what you are thankful for
- Talk to a member of the clergy
- Practice grace
- Work with a life coach
- Believe in yourself
- Make a list of ten things you would like to do before you die
- Write a letter to someone who has made your life better and tell them why (you don't have to send the letter if you don't want to)
- Use guided meditation
- Sit outdoors by a fire-pit, watching the flames and listening to the night sounds
- Lie down where the afternoon sun streams in a window
- Go to a spa
- Eat a meal by candlelight
- Walk in the rain
- Lay in the grass
- Going places–getting a change of scenery
- Sit in front of a large body of water (like an ocean) day dreaming and/or praying.
- Do some yard work
- Raise chickens or another animal
- I find that sitting on my porch, with attention to nature helps.
- Plant a garden
- Go hiking
- Go for a walk in a park or someplace else that's peaceful

- Plant a tree
- Feed the birds
- Gathering flowers from my garden
- Appreciate Seasonal Changes
- Canoe
- Climb a tree
- Go Fishing
- Go hunting
- Look at the stars
- Stare up at the sky and make shapes out of the clouds
- Watch the sunrise
- Watch the sunset
- Go outside and watch the birds and other animals
- Listen to running water
- Listen to ocean waves or the sound of water
- Hang up a wind chime
- Breathe in fresh air
- Open your windows and let in fresh air
- Smell a flower
- Wiggle your bare feet in overgrown grass.
- Go to the local market
- Cook out
- Go on a picnic
- Be a tourist in your own city