VA Caregiver Support

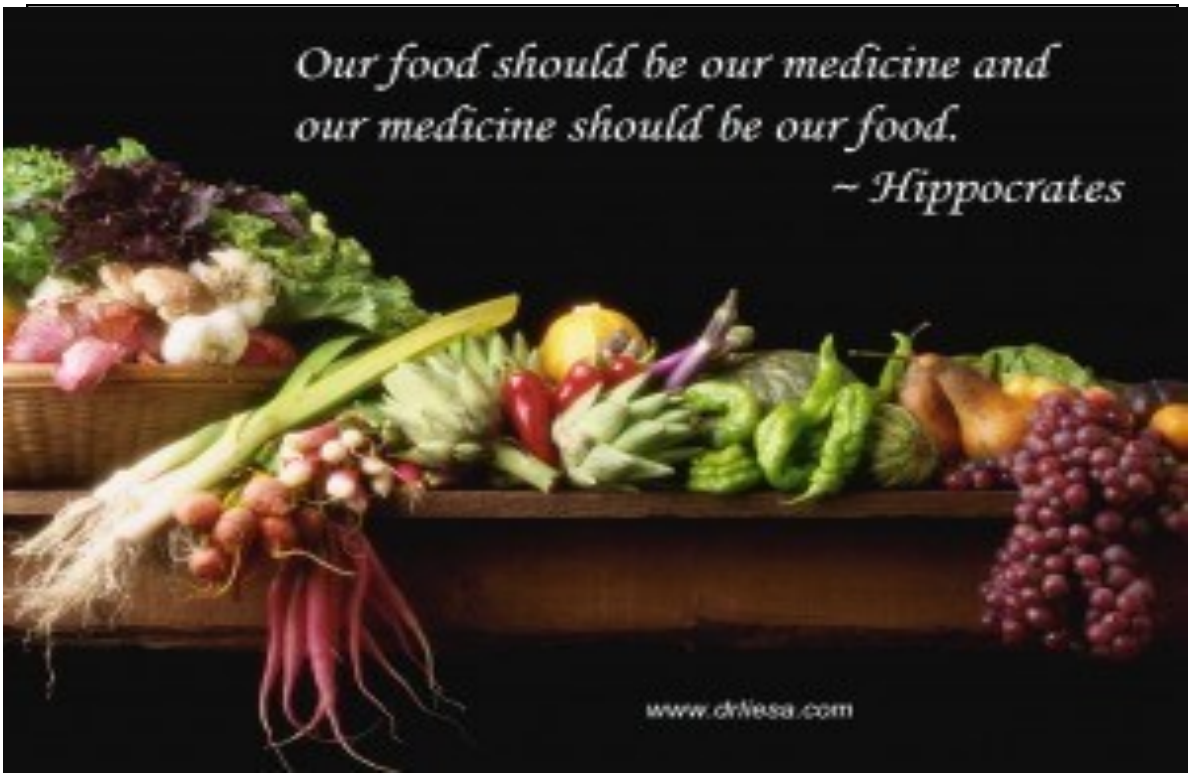
Building on the Small Moments of Self Care
Daily Attention Diary

CAREGIVER SUPPORT LINE
1-855-260-3274

14	Monday- Physical	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
15	Tuesday- Mental	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
15	Wednesday- Emotional	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
16	Thursday- Behavioral	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
17	Friday- Social	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
18	Saturday- Meaning / Nature	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted
19	Sunday- Meditation/Visualization	Click for Activity	Benefits Noted

Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Physical Wellbeing



Quote: “One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever we are doing and devote our attention to eating” Pavaratti

Exercise: Allow yourself to take the time to truly appreciate the process of preparing and enjoying a healthy meal. Slow down, set the table, notice what you want to eat, pay attention to the taste and texture, enjoy the flavors, make something different, try a new fruit or vegetable, a new recipe, notice when you are full, and give thanks. Making a ritual of our meals and giving care to how we feed our bodies will benefit body and soul.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Mental Wellbeing

Quote: "The desire to create is one of the deepest yearnings of the human soul."
Dieter Uchtdorf

Exercise: When people create for the sake of creating, all self-consciousness seems to disappear. Creativity offers a distraction, freeing your mind from pressure, stress, or deadlines and allowing you to get swept away in new possibilities and revealing hidden passions. Get lost today in creativity. Drift off into a day dream, draw a picture, or write a story. Make music, art, or a meal. Honor your instinctive need for creative expression and reap the benefits of a long, healthy, and vital life.

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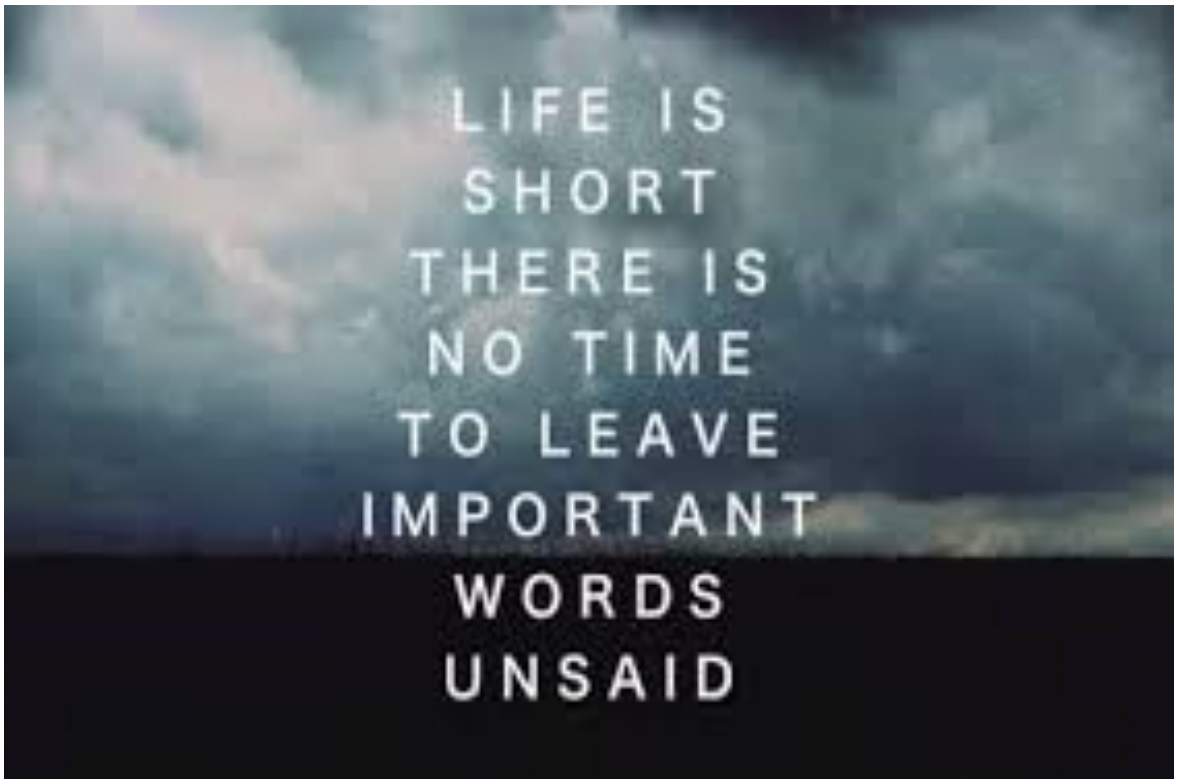
Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Emotional Wellbeing



Quote: “A bird doesn’t sing because it has an answer, It sings because it has a song.”

Maya Angelou

Exercise: Expression of feeling has the power to heal or harm. Expression can come in words, in tears, in laughter, in writing and art, in music and dance. Through expression you can find release and a deeper understanding of yourself as well as a deeper connection to others. Your expression of emotion may inspire you and inspire others. Take some time today to embrace the gift of expressing what is in your heart. Whatever means you may best express yourself, take the time today “to sing your song”.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Behavioral Wellness

Quote: “I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self-indulgent. Caring for myself is an act of survival.” Audre Lord

Exercise: Respect the energy that you expend in caring for another and spend some time this day caring for your needs. What comfort, rest, self-care activity would restore you? Place yourself and your need for care in the center of your attention. Consider asking for help, sharing your struggles, having some fun, finding some comforts to soothe you. Even a small act of nurturing will not be lost on you. Enjoy attention on you! It is an act of self preservation.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Social Connection

Quote: "Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it whoever you are, you need one." Jane Howard

Exercise: Caregivers expend their energy giving to others and are especially in need of a strong network to support, restore, and to lean on during the tough times. You may get stuck expecting support to come from familiar family and friends and resist opening yourself up to being flexible and reaching out to new sources of support if the familiar are unavailable. Be open and creative in your search for connection. Consider joining a group, or reaching out to someone new. Greet someone as you pass, share a friendly word or your beautiful smile. Even the smallest moment of connection can lift your spirits, assist you in keeping perspective, and brighten your day. Today expand your network of friends and family. You need them all.

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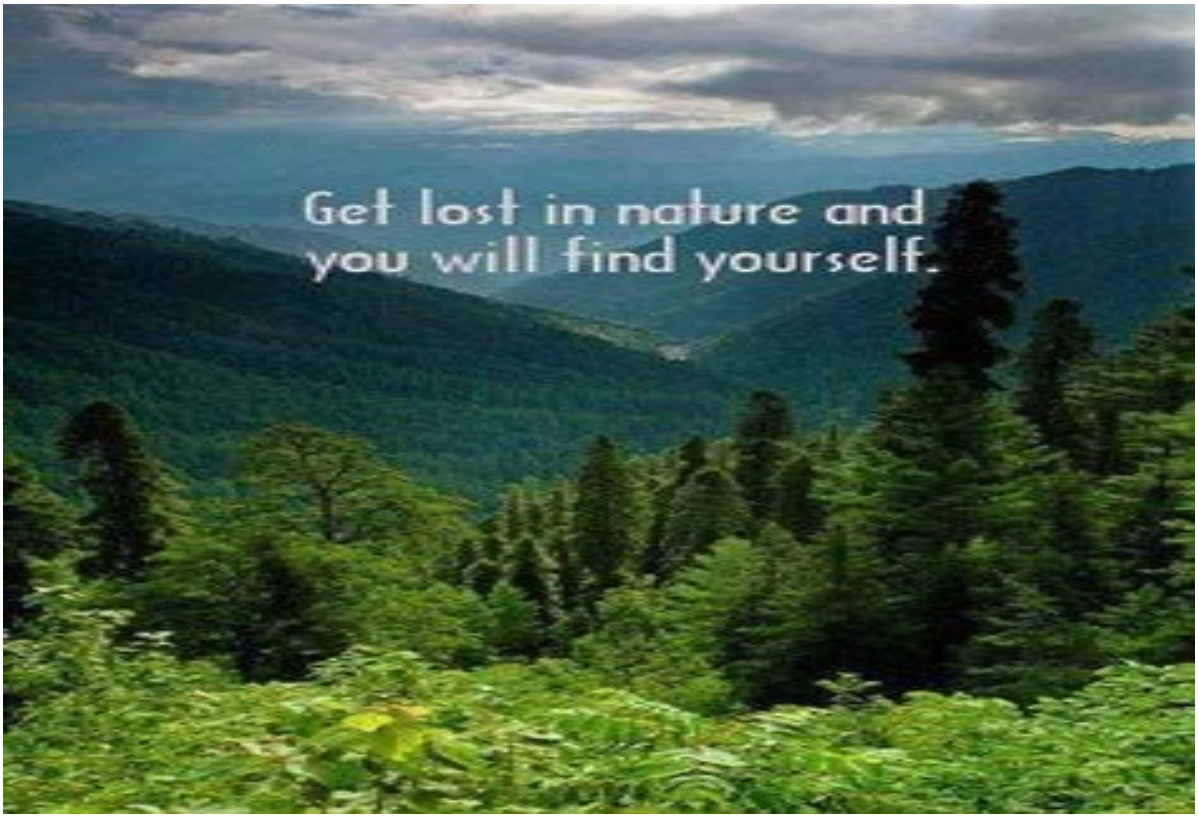
Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Seek Nature



Quote: “Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished” Lao Tzu

Exercise: One may easily become lost in the frantic pace and daily demands of Caregiving. One way to reconnect to what has been lost is to simply slow down and absorb the wonder and pace of the natural world. Nature’s wisdom and beauty can calm, renew, and expand you. Allow yourself the opportunity today to let Nature guide you back to yourself. Listen, observe, bask in the peace and majesty all around you. Let Natures’ trail bring you home.

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Return to Daily Attention Diary

Daily Theme: Mindfulness/Visualization

Quote: “Realize deeply that the present moment is all you have. Make the now the primary focus of your life” Eckhart Tolle

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 A Day at the Beach Visualization.
(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