



## **Quiet on the Homefront: Restoring Connections at Home Handout**

Make your home a place of comfort. Your home can be a place of calm for you and your loved ones. Home can be a refuge from the challenges in daily life. This space can provide the glue to hold your family together. How do you create this refuge?

**Make your home a retreat.** Your home can be a place of security, soothing, and comfort. Give it proper care and attention.

- **Create Order.** Clutter is chaotic, and order brings calm. Look at your environment, start small, a closet, a drawer, and create some order. A consistent clean home base is more inviting and much more efficient if you know where things are. Include family in a project of cleaning and clearing house.
- **Add light and color.** Bring life into your space by opening windows and letting the air and light in. Light and color can have a significant impact on your mood. What colors bring you a feeling of contentment or joy?
- **Recognize the impact of sound.** Take a break from the constant background noise. Turn off the TV. Fill your space with quiet or turn on some energizing or soothing music.
- **Improve the scent.** Warm your home with the scents of home cooking, a scented candle, or incense. Infuse the air with natural aromatherapy oils.
- **Highlight what matters.** Make a special place for pictures or mementos that help you remember what and who matters to you.
- **Bring nature inside.** Gather some wild flowers, make a fire in the fireplace, plant some herbs by the kitchen window.

**Identify who is a part of your circle of support.** Identify people that nurture and support you. Who gives you respite from the outside world? Continue to expand your circle of support.

- **Write down your supports.** Sometimes when stressed it's hard to remember the people you can call on for support. Develop a reminder list of those you might call on when you need it the most. Make the definition of support as broad as possible. The more support you have, especially as you age, the better you will cope with life challenges.



**Communicate clearly. Listen to others and show respect and compassion. Make it safe for everyone to share their thoughts and feelings, no matter their age.**

- **Calm down first.** In order to communicate or listen with respect and fairness, you need to be calm. Take a break until you calm down then return to discuss.
- **Keep it simple.** When sharing a concern or complaint start by describing the details of the event. What happened that prompted your reaction? Don't pile on multiple events. Describe the facts without adding your spin on it. Start with the facts such as, "when you did this or said this".
- **Share the feeling.** Describe how you feel with one word. When you share more than the feeling word, you are probably making a case against the other person.
- **Relate what you need.** Let the person know what you needed.
- **Make a request.** Ask for what you would like from the other person moving forward. Recognize they can decide to give this or not.
- **Give them space.** Allow the other person the room to listen and reflect.

**Make time to connect.** Make time to talk and connect with one another. Engage in a project, or plan an activity together, have a date night. Find out what your loved ones are up to and be curious about them.

**Plan and enjoy family rituals.** Make time with family and friends a regular ritual. Regular rituals bring your supports together and build your bonds. Examples of rituals are; Sunday dinner with family or friends, holiday parties, daily dog walk, reading a bedtime story, even routine chores.

**Clarify rules and roles of house members.** Make sure each person knows what they are responsible for. This helps all members contribute and have a stake in a functioning Homefront.

**Pay attention and affirm each other.** You strengthen your bonds when you notice each other and give positive feedback. Give a compliment!

**Learn to soothe yourself.** Your loved ones can't always give you what you need. That is why it helps when you know how to find comfort and relief for yourself. Build a bag of self-care tricks that you can turn to when you are in need. What and who may help you calm down, slow down, and feel nurtured? Try mindful meditation as a source of calm.