



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

Developing a nurturing and restorative environment for you and your loved ones can be the glue that holds you all together when facing the challenges in your daily life. You can build a Homefront within yourself individually, and also with your loved ones, that will provide that safe and comforting place to turn to. How do you create this refuge?

**Enhance your physical home environment-**Your physical home environment can offer you a place of security, soothing, contentment, and comfort if given 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 TV noise, fill your space with some quiet, or turn on some energizing or soothing music.
- **Improve the scent-**Warm your home with the scents of home cooking, light a scented candle, incense, or 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.
- **Bringing nature inside-**Gather some wild flowers, make a fire in the fireplace, plant some herbs by the kitchen window.

**Identify your circle of support-**Identify all the people that provide you nurturing, support, and respite from the world around you. Continue to expand your circle

- **Write down your supports-**Sometimes when stressed it's hard to remember the people or 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 because the more support you have, especially as you age, the better able you will be to cope with life challenges.



**Communicate and listen clearly and compassionately-** Establishing safety in communication while negotiating the demands of everyday life requires the ability to express yourself clearly, and the ability to listen with respect to each person's point of view, no matter what 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-**Start by describing the details of the event that prompted your reaction (don't pile on multiple events). Describe the facts without adding your spin on it. Such as, "when you did this or said this".
- **Share the feeling-**Describe how you feel with one word. Any more than one word is most likely accusing or making a case about the other person.
- **Relate what you need-**Let the person know what it is you need.
- **Make a request-**Ask for what you would like from the other person moving forward with the recognition 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.

**Engage in Family Rituals-**Rituals such as Sunday dinner with family or friends, holiday parties, or daily dog walking, reading a bedtime story, even shared routine chores, bring together your circle of support and build stronger connections.

**Clarify Rules and Roles, Develop Routines and Responsibilities-**This helps all members contribute and have a stake in a functioning Homefront and is critical to the working of any efficient system.

**Pay attention and Affirm each other-**You strengthen your bonds when you pay attention and give positive feedback and affirmation to each other. Give a compliment!

**Learn to soothe yourself-**When your loved ones are not able to meet your needs it is critical you are able to dig down deep to find, comfort, and relief yourself. Build a bag of tricks that you can turn to when you find yourself in need. Think about what gives you comfort. What and who may help you calm down, slow down, and feel nurtured? Consider developing a practice of Mindful meditation to restore your calm when in need.