

CAREGIVER CONNECTION

EMBRACE ~ EDUCATE~ENGAGE~EMPOWER

Maintaining Good Mental Health

Whether you realize it or not, mental health plays a big part in your overall well-being. When you're mentally healthy, you are able to enjoy your life and the people in it, feel good about yourself, keep up good relationships, and deal with stress. It's normal for your mental health to shift over time—we all face difficult situations in our lives. Creating positive habits is a great way to support your mental health when you're doing well and helps you build skills to use if you do face symptoms of a mental health condition.

Food Choices and Nutrition

The quality of food you eat can impact your overall physical and mental health. Your gut is often called “the second brain” and communicates with your actual brain. Eating nutritious foods is the number one thing you can do to keep your gut microbiome healthy and protect your brain. The following are important nutrients for mental health.

- * **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** essential to brain health and reduce inflammation and risk of heart disease
- * **B-Group Vitamins:** help to regulate

brain chemicals, immune function, and amino acids (the building blocs of proteins)

- * **Vitamin D:** important for brain function, including mood and critical thinking

Exercise

Staying active benefits many aspects of health and can prevent physical and mental health symptoms from worsening. Making time for exercise and movement each day improves self-esteem, brain function, and sleep and has been found to lessen social withdrawal and stress. You don't have to workout for hours on end—just 15 minutes of intense exercise at a time, ten times a week, will get you the recommended amount of physical activity. Choose activities that are easy to work into your life—walk the dog for an extra 20 minutes or do some floor exercises while watching a favorite show.

Sleep

Your health heavily depends on how rested you are. Sleep plays a role in your moods, ability to learn and make memories, organ health, immune system, and other bodily functions like appetite metabolism, and hormone release. It also helps the body re-energize its cells and

clear out toxins.

Good quality sleep means:

- * Being asleep for 85% of the time you're in bed or more
- * Falling asleep in under 30 minutes
- * Waking up no more than once per night for no longer than 20 minutes

Stress Management

Dealing with stress is a normal part of life—we all experience it during times of too much responsibility, too little sleep or external worries like money or relationships. Consistently high stress—because you are unable to relieve your stress or are constantly facing stressful situations—can negatively impact attention, memory and how you deal with emotions in the long term.

Identify Coping Skills

Coping skills are activities or strategies you can use to reduce or tolerate tough feelings. No one thing works for everyone, so it might take a few tries to figure out what helps you. You may want to keep a running of what works for you, like calling a friend or doing an at-home workout.

Check out “Building Your Coping Toolbox” at mhanational.org/coping-toolbox

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Special Points of Interest:

- **Maintaining Good Mental Health**
- **Community Resource Spotlight**
- **The Ten Absolutes of Alzheimer's Care**
- **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Corner**
- **Recipe Corner - Southwest Salad**

A Note from Tracy...

As a caregiver, daily you are constantly fighting battles, putting out fires, organizing, coordinating and a host of other jobs that are required as a caregiver. I hope you will use some of the suggestions in the Maintaining Good Mental Health article to take time for you and to focus on your mental health.

Take time to read and use the Ten Absolutes for Alzheimer's Care. These are valuable absolutes that can help everyone involved in the care of someone with Alzheimer's or related dementias.

Grandparents, be sure to check out the gardening tips and start planning to do some fall gardening with your grandkids.

I hope the resources and information in this newsletter will help you with reducing the stress and strain that can come from caregiving. Please contact myself or our I&A line at FTAAD anytime. We're here to help!

Wishing you a blessed day!
Tracy Buckles
 Health Promotion Specialist

Family Caregiving...Don't Try It Alone

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Thought for the Day...

"Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyways."

~Emory Austin

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[Building Your Coping Toolbox | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)

Build A Support System

Having people in your life who you relate to and can lean on goes a long way in improving your mood and general well-being. Having people to support you during times of hardship protects your long-term mental health. Not only is a strong support system often prevent mental health concerns or symptoms from developing into a diagnosable mental health condition—a strong social system has also been shown to improve overall outcomes in recovering from a mental health condition.

Find your people!!!

- * Connect with people over shared hobbies and interests.
- * Consider community service or volunteering.
- * Focus on quality relationships

If you are concerned about your mental health or want to just check in with yourself, take a screen at [Take a Mental Health Test - MHA Screening \(mhanational.org\)](#)

Source: Mental Health America

Community Resources Spotlight

Active & Ageless

The YMCA of Kingsport offers ACTIVE & AGELESS programs designed for men and women, ages 55 and older, who want a greater sense of wellness and health. The programs are designed to increase senior's overall health and improve their quality of life. The services focus on strengthening community relationships and fostering social interaction, improving participants knowledge on individual health, increasing mobility, balance, and strength and improving overall mental health.

They offer monthly educational classes on a variety of topics developed specifically for older adults. They also offer Silver & Fit, and Line Dancing group exercise classes. The YMCA also offers a Parkinson's Program that includes a support group, Parkinson's Cycle, Parkinson's Aquatics and Rock Steady: Parkinson's Boxing Class. There are also weekly social events, monthly potlucks and day-trips.

If you are a caregiver you may think, I don't have time to get to the YMCA. But if you take time to take care of yourself you will be more capable of caring for your loved one. The staff can help you develop a plan to fit your schedule. If you are caring for someone with Parkinson's Disease be sure and check out their programs available for someone with Parkinson's! You both could benefit from time at the YMCA of Kingsport. For more information contact the YMCA of Kingsport at 423-247-9622.

The Ten Absolutes of Alzheimer's Care

1. Never **ARGUE**, instead **AGREE**
2. Never **REASON**, instead **DIVERT**
3. Never **SHAME**, instead **DISTRACT**
4. Never **LECTURE**, instead **REASSURE**
5. Never say **REMEMBER**, instead say **REMINISCE**
6. Never say **I TOLD YOU**, instead **REPEAT**
7. Never say **YOU CAN'T**, instead say **DO WHAT YOU CAN**
8. Never **COMMAND** or **DEMAND**, instead **ASK** or **MODEL**
9. Never **CONDESCEND**, instead **ENCOURAGE** and **PRAISE**
10. Never **FORCE**, instead **REINFORCE**



If you are a family caregiver of someone with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias, you want to learn more or you have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or related dementias you can reach out to Alzheimer's Tennessee for more information, resources and assistance. Contact the Northeast Tennessee Regional Director, Tracey Kendall Wilson at 423-232-8993 or email Tracey.KendallWilson@TNalz.org.



Provided by Alzheimer's Tennessee. Alzheimer's Tennessee is a non-profit organization founded by Tennessee families and professionals in 1983. The 501c3 organization's mission is to serve those facing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, to promote brain health through education, and to champion global research, prevention and treatment efforts.

Grandfamilies Corner: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Gardening with Kids—Making It A Fun Family Activity!

Gardening with your grandkids is a great family activity. It gets them off the couch, away from the electronic devices and outdoors to enjoy nature. Gardening with grandkids can teach a lot of great lessons. Children like to learn by doing. And, they love to play in the dirt. Planting a flower or edible garden together with them can accomplish all of the above.

Gardening also helps teach them an important life skill...responsibility. Giving them the responsibility for watering, weeding and maintaining their garden also fosters a sense of accomplishment when the garden flourishes. It also teaches them the importance of taking care of our environment. Teaching them the basics of gardening will help them gain a better appreciation for this beautiful planet we live on.

Here are some gardening tips to help cultivate a positive experience for them:

Set them up for success

Choose flowers or vegetables that are easy to grow. Your grandchild can

watch their plants sprout within a matter of days. Starting your plants from seed is an excellent science lesson. Plant two different types of seeds and see which one is quickest to sprout. Once mature enough, they can then be transplanted into your flowerbed or garden.



Show It Off

Kids love to be the center of attention. Be sure to take lots of photos of their garden's progress. Make a photo album or shoot a video. Make these memories last a lifetime. Post their success on Facebook if you are on there for all the world to see. Make it a proud kid/grandparent moment.

Take It In The Kitchen

If your child planted an edible garden, find a kid-friendly recipe you can make together using the fruits and vegetables that he or she picked. It can be simple like a salad or side dish. This will really allow them to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Gardening with grandkids is a rewarding experience. It is an awesome opportunity to spend quality time together as a family while teaching them valuable skills. The key is to have fun! Here are some easy to grow flowers and vegetables to try with your grandkids:

- Sunflowers
- Marigolds
- Lettuces
- String beans
- Zinnias
- Vinca
- Radishes
- Strawberries

There are plenty of fall plants that you can start thinking and planning for now to plant.

If you receive SNAP benefits you can purchase seeds and plants that will produce food for the household to eat. This is an excellent way to stretch your food budget. Most of our local farmer's markets also take SNAP so utilize them if you aren't able to have your own garden. If you need assistance applying or need to submit any changes related to your SNAP circumstances contact our SNAP Outreach Coordinator at 423-722-5093.

Parenting Prime Time is open to all parents and caregivers.

Parenting Prime Time offers skills, confidence, and a place to belong! They offer free drop-in social time; an opportunity for parenting questions to get answered; referrals to parenting classes and groups.

Visit [Bristol's Promise for Parents | Bristol's Promise \(bristolspromise.org\)](http://Bristol's Promise for Parents | Bristol's Promise (bristolspromise.org)) to learn more about the Parenting educator network.

Provided by Ballad Health, Bristol Housing, and nurturings - Bristol's Promise Parenting Network



Coffee and Conversation Groups

A monthly gathering for grandparents and relative caregivers to provide encouragement, connection, and resources.

Johnson City - 2nd Monday each month, 10am,
Memorial Park Community Center, 510 Bert Street.
Call 423-434-5750 to let the center know you are coming. For more information contact Elizabeth Renfro at 423-753-1680 or eelizondo@utk.edu

Kingsport - 2nd Wednesday each month, 10am,
Lynn View Community Center-Artisan Center Room,
257 Walker St. For more information or to request information to join virtually contact Susie Pedersen, 423-378-3409, ext. 18 or spedersen@uwaykpt.org

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Recipe Corner

Southwest Salad

In hot summer weather, salads are a great way to get lots of veggies and not have to turn on the stove or oven for supper. Try this Southwest Salad as a side dish or add grilled chicken or ground beef or turkey to it for a entrée salad.

Makes 7 servings

Ingredients

1 cup cucumber, chopped, with peel
1 can (8 oz) corn, drained, rinsed
1 can (15-oz) stewed tomatoes, no sodium added
1 can (15 oz) black beans, no sodium added, drained and rinsed
2 Tablespoons red pepper, chopped
2 Tablespoons green pepper, chopped
2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon cumin, ground
1/4 tsp cilantro or coriander, dried
1/8 tsp black pepper



Instructions

Combine ingredients and mix well.
Serve cold.

Note: if you do not have the seasonings listed try using taco seasoning or a southwest seasoning. You can also use diced tomatoes for the stewed tomatoes.

Source: www.SNAP4CT.org

Connecting People with the Assistance They Need:

Contact us at:

Information & Assistance Line

(423) 928-3258

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We hope you find the newsletter informative.

Please let us know if:

- You are willing to receive the newsletter via email
- You are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter
- If you have ideas/suggestions for future editions.

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