The Wellness Initiative is a program of the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Center at the University of Michigan. This initiative supports family caregivers of adults living with memory loss through providing innovative wellness programs emphasizing stress resilience to ensure continued health and well-being on the caregiving journey.

Sun at the Gate
Monday Feb 2nd, 2020

Through the eyes of Love, almost anything can become as beautiful as it is.

~ Wayne Muller

Sun! This morning and this past Sunday and Monday brought the welcome relief of radiant sunlight the likes of which we haven’t experienced in weeks in mid-Michigan. While it is certainly expected for our winter to have some gloom, you are correct if you’ve been wondering if conditions have been more stark than usual. Yes, indeed. This has been one of the cloudiest stretches in decades. For those of us particularly sensitive to light when it comes to our mood and sense of energy, you may be nodding, rolling your eyes or banging your head against the wall. It doesn’t take a news report to remind us how we’re feeling right now! So, how are you doing right now? And, how do you rejuvenate, regenerate and renew yourself when sunlight and blue skies are not visible? Of course, both sunlight and blue skies are technically there on the other side of the cloud cover, but it can feel so impenetrable.

In recent years, there has been increased interest in the science of wellbeing and research investigating what makes us feel well versus the historical focus of human health and medicine (what makes us unwell). Thankfully, most signs point toward accessible and simple practices (such as walking in the sunlight). What is complicated and intricate is, of course, us. We are all complicated and so are our lives. While most wellbeing practices are free (and many we already know how to do), we could benefit from doing them more consistently and intentionally. To further complicate a simple thing, these healthy habits are often the first to go in the life of a caregiver who feels compelled (or helpless) and instead, may habitually set these aside or postpones due to other, more “important” responsibilities. Perhaps more
In the spirit of February and love (for the love of love!), please raise a kind eyebrow at yourself today and gently ask yourself: **What is something simple I could do to improve my wellbeing right now, in this moment?** Do this, please. And do the simple thing, just for you and for all who depend on you to be well. **May you be well.**

With gratitude,

—Laura Rice-Oeschger, LMSW

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**Upcoming Programs**

Please register [online](#), or call 734-936-8803 to reserve your place.

**Catching Your Breath**

A monthly well-being and mindfulness program for family caregivers of adults living with memory loss. The program varies each month and newcomers are always welcome. Registration required.

- February 10 at 10:00 - 11:30am
- March 9 at 10:00 - 11:30am
- April 13 at 10:00 - 11:30am

**Mindfulness-based Dementia Care**

An 8-week program designed for care partners of adults living with memory loss. Participants learn how the practice of mindfulness helps with the challenges and stresses of dementia care. Registration required.

- Wednesdays, April 8 - May 27
- 10:00am - Noon

All events take place at the U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens Auditorium

1800 N. Dixboro Road in Ann Arbor

Please note: Parking at Matthaei is $1.70/hr. If you need assistance with this fee, please let us know.

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**Soothing Word of the Month**

**Wabi-sabi**

Though difficult to distill, wabi-sabi is the Japanese art of appreciating beauty in the naturally imperfect world. “Wabi-sabi nurtures all that is authentic by acknowledging three simple realities: nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect.”
Caregiver Research Studies

Couples' Well-Being in Everyday Life Study (C-WEL Study)
Investigating everyday challenges among couples living with early-stage (mild) dementia and their responses to these challenges to learn more about ways to help both partners live well together. Study is recruiting couples in which one partner is 65 or older, has received a diagnosis of dementia within the last 3 years, and has mild cognitive impairment. Contact cwelstudy@umich.edu or 734-232-0532. This study team is enrolling participants who live within 60 miles of Ann Arbor to meet with them at home and over the phone.

The ACE Project
This study is investigating caregiver mental health, physical health, and social supports with the aim of developing culturally tailored programming. This study is seeking African American caregivers of persons with dementia or cognitive impairments to complete a survey. Contact Dr. Sheria Robinson-Lane at grices@med.umich.edu or 734-764-9280. This study team will meet participants in the home.

Our Center supports many other research studies that you or your family member may be interested in. For a full list of recruiting studies, please visit the link here.