Monthly Wellness Update

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.

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I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day

-- Johnny Nash

Happy New Year!

The year 2020, or rather the sound of it, feels surprising to me. Perhaps this sounds space-agey and futuristic to you, too. Beyond the bewilderment of entering a new decade, more than one person in my life has expressed optimism for this year with a play on words... 2020: a year of clarity. I truly appreciate this outlook and have been wondering what this may mean in my own life. What might I need to see more clearly? What conditions, people, and activities help me see my life with more clarity? Seeing clearly sounds great and yet there's a paradox here. When we see clearly, we may also see more of our lives and ourselves. When we see more, we may feel the need to respond to more. When we try and respond to more, we can become overwhelmed. Placing a mindful lens as a filter, we begin to recognize how seeing clearly does not mean we need to respond to everything, or anything at all in the moment actually. It simply means we have more information for making the wisest next step on our path. With clear seeing we can see the obstacles, the dark clouds, and the brightness of our own guiding light. When we see clearly, we can respond, make choices and take steps with greater confidence.

I believe good questions help to illuminate the direction we wish to follow. As the recipient (and lover) of great questions, I have experienced how questions have the potential to transform where we are and even how we are in an instant. As you review the past year and look around from where you are standing...
now, at the top of 2020, consider the following questions:

- What changes stand out the most? Outwardly and inwardly?
- What are you glad you learned?
- How has this changed you?
- In what ways have you grown?
- How have your needs changed?
- What do you need in order to express these needs or take care of yourself with greater continuity and greater ease?
- What experiences would you like to have in 2020?
- Who are the people you would like to see more of this year? The people who bring out the best in you and understand who you are?

I hope you will join us for Catching Your Breath this month where we will explore good questions and adjust our lenses, together, to see our lives more clearly.

With gratitude,

—Laura Rice-Oeschger, LMSW

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.

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

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.

Soothing Word of the Month

Penumbra
In a solar or lunar eclipse, the dark part of the shadow on the earth’s surface is called the umbra and lighter part is called the penumbra. Friday, January 10th is the next penumbral lunar eclipse. This will be a complete eclipse. With the naked eye, we will simply see a full moon.

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.