



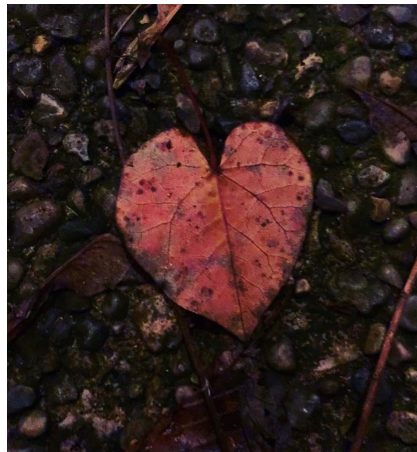
**MICHIGAN MEDICINE**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**MICHIGAN ALZHEIMER'S  
DISEASE CENTER**

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.

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

## Monthly Wellness Update



*You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.*

— Lucille Ball

As another season arrives, so too another phase of the pandemic and likely a new phase of our own lives. Does this feel like a new phase for you? We've never been here before and there is no certain road map beyond the daily intersections of our good judgement and wise action in response to what is happening around and within us. We are living amidst the effort of maintaining personal stability while also attending to sorrow and the weariness of continued physical distancing. *All of this* alongside the growing tensions toward November and the inevitable approach of colder weather which will require more time indoors. But, wait! Not yet! Whether you feel welcoming toward autumn or not, it is still summer. It is so challenging to be where we actually are and not preoccupied with an uncertain future, aside from the changing of seasons. One thing we can certainly take away from this year is how we have no idea what is going to happen next. This is at once unnerving and also, liberating. We are free to be where we actually are and it is only here where we are able to notice, take in, and respond to what is true and helpful for us right now.

We can all agree how maintaining our health while doing our best to encourage ourselves and remain hopeful through uncertainty is unquestionably hard. Caregivers are pressed now more than ever to lift additional bootstraps and chin up during what may be the hardest work they've experienced and doing so with greater isolation. While there are no easy solutions, there are possibilities for each of us to make things less complicated and reduce the impact of certain stressors. Whether you are a caregiver or not, it begins with checking in regularly to inquire, understand, and learn from where you are. It's critical to acknowledge and include our struggles and fatigue. It's also an essential act of healthy coping to include what may not be receiving as much of our attention.

Such as...

*How am I growing through this?*

*What was once acceptable in my life and is no longer necessary or acceptable?*

*How is this experience calling forth the best in me?*

*How is this experience calling forth the best in us (whomever “us” may be in your perspective)?*

And now, as best you can without self-judgement and only as a thoughtful curiosity:

*How is this experience calling forth the worst in others? And how might this experience be calling forth the worst in me?*

Simply reading this may cause you to flinch. And yet, seeing and holding these knowings side by side as a caring inquiry underscores the stunning breadth of our own direct and lived experience during these times. We can discover how much we actually know about ourselves in the moment. Compassion can give us the courage and confidence we need to hold the best of ourselves *and* the hardest truths about ourselves simultaneously. We're allowed to feel contradictory feelings at the same time... joy and grief, anger and appreciation. Sadly, when we reflexively recoil or turn away from harder feeling states we miss the opportunity to learn about the information they carry. We may be numbing ourselves to the curiosity we need for compassion and kindness to arise naturally. We can tell a kinder story when we are aware of the story we are narrating about ourselves. During these difficult times, we may not be casting ourselves in the best light. This awareness, catching the story and including more about our learning and growth is necessary for remaining flexible and building resilience. We can discover the certainty we are looking for within ourselves. Most importantly, this supports our ability to care for ourselves and apply compassion generously. Compassion guides us more skillfully toward greater connection and courage through our hardships. When compassion for ourselves becomes a familiar practice, we can rely on it to be there when we need it most.

How about right now?

In gratitude,

—Laura Rice-Oeschger, LMSW



## Catching Your Breath

Please register [online](#), or call 734-615-8293 to reserve your place.



### **VIRTUAL: 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.

Monday, September 21 at 10:00 - 11:30AM

**Registration required by Friday, September 18. We will send you the virtual call details upon registration.**

[Register here](#)

## New support group for those living with MCI or early-stage dementia starting in October

We are excited to announce a new support group launching in October. Mitten Minds Support Group is available specifically for individuals with mild cognitive impairment or early-stage dementia. The group will meet monthly on the third Tuesday of the month from 3:00-4:00pm, and newcomers are welcome at any time.



Registration is required for each session to receive the virtual log-in information.

For more information, or to register please visit the link below.

More information here

## New Research Study Looking for Caregivers



### Perceptions of Family Caregivers of Older Adults with Dementia Regarding Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia, and the Impact of COVID-19

Exploring the experiences of caregivers of people with dementia regarding challenging symptoms of dementia, how they manage these symptoms in the home, and how their experiences have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study is seeking

family caregivers living with older adults with dementia to participate in individual interviews. Contact Melissa Harris at [mharris1@umich.edu](mailto:mharris1@umich.edu) or 405-513-1271. **This study will meet with participants virtually or by telephone.**

More information here

## Soothing word of the month



### Mångata

Swedish -This beautiful Swedish word refers to the road-like reflection of the moon on the water. It's the long, wavy shape that appears across the water when the moon is shining on it. It is made up of the prefixes "*Måne*" meaning moon, and "*gata*" meaning street/road. For this reason, it is sometimes indirectly translated as "moon-path," "moon-river," "moon-track," or "moon-wake."

*\*Please pause here and take a few slow, intentional breaths.  
If possible, close your eyes and allow this brief rest in the moment\**

**Have a Seat.  
Practicing alone, together.**  
with Laura Rice-Oeschger, LMSW



**Thursdays, 12:00 - 12:30PM**  
**Virtually via Zoom**

We are happy to announce our new weekly Have a Seat mindfulness meditation program taking place Thursdays at noon. To participate in this program, all you need is a computer to join via the web link or a phone to listen to the guided meditation. More information is available on our website [here](#). **Would you like to receive weekly reminders for the program? If so, subscribe below.**

Subscribe to receive weekly reminders

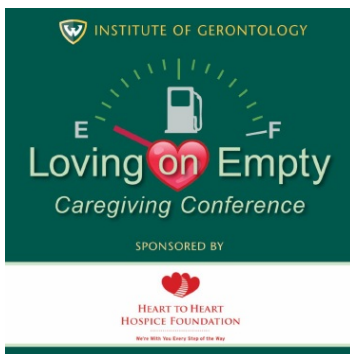
## Upcoming Programs



### "The Latest Findings in Dementia Research"

**September 23, 2:00 - 3:30PM**

Bruno Giordani, PhD, Associate Director of our Center will present the latest research findings coming out of the annual Alzheimer's Association International Conference this past July. **Registration is required [here](#).**



### Loving on Empty: Free Conference for Family Caregivers

**September 19, 10:00AM - Noon**

Hosted by Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology, in partnership with Heart to Heart Hospice. Paula Duren of Universal Dementia Caregivers, Peter Lichtenberg, PhD of Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology, and Breeda Miller, Author will present. **Registration is required [here](#).**

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