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.

NOVEMBER 2020

Monthly Wellness Update

"Life is like an ever-shifting kaleidoscope - a slight change, and all patterns alter."
— Sharon Salzberg

When life gets rough or changes on a dime, who shows up, speaks up and leans in matters. Our personal care teams and communities are a lifeline for sharing and connecting through challenges and our unique struggles. Our interconnectedness and interdependence with one another has been tested this year in ways which are certainly historic and for most, unprecedented in our lifetimes. In the past week, our commonalities and challenges have been further highlighted amidst political tensions while simultaneously generating renewed hope and concerns. These include the impact of the presidential election and the promising news regarding a COVID vaccine from Pfizer. It’s all quite a lot to digest right now. Integrating these changes may also give rise to a new facet of disorientation as we review the past two seasons and contemplate how we have made it through, personally and collectively.

If you are a caregiver, I hope you are treating yourself with extra gentleness right now. Evaluating ourselves is common practice in our performance driven culture and yet, can we give ourselves a break? As I look over at my bookshelf the title, It's Okay That You're Not Okay, stands out among the rest. Apropos of the times, it’s a book about complicated grief (and the chorus responds: you can say that again!). What is occurring in our nation at this time with the pandemic is nothing less than catastrophic and the impact of these traumas, in addition to a toxic political climate, has yet to be fully determined. In times of great difficulty, when the mind and body are tired and our hearts feel heavy with grief or fear, a small uplifting shift can offer enough relief to regain our footing. The sun rises again and kindness means everything. As Sharon Salzburg expressed, “a slight change, and all patterns alter.” In this shift, as we adapt once again by redistributing the weight of things, we move forward with appreciation for our own strength and through the encouragement of others, we find ways to keep moving. While large events, like an election, may present a new horizon for ourselves and inspire relief or joy, it is most often through the smaller, daily kindnesses and reliable personal connections which truly invigorate our lives with hope and...
This month is National Caregiving Month and I hope you will join us for additional support, community, inspiration, practice and encouragement during the week of November 16 - 23. Details are below.

In gratitude,

—Laura Rice-Oeschger, LMSW

November is National Caregiving Month

November is National Caregiving Month, and we are thrilled that our Wellness initiative works to support caregivers in so many ways. In hopes of offering additional support, community, inspiration, practice and encouragement during this month, we are holding Caregiver Wellness Week from November 16 - 23. The week will offer the following:

**Catching Your Breath**
Monthly gathering for family caregivers featuring different wellness topics, mindfulness practice and the experience of nature on wellbeing
Monday, November 16 at 10:00AM
Registration required by Friday, November 13 [here](#). The Zoom link is sent directly to registrants.

**Have a Seat**
Weekly drop-in presence practice through mindfulness meditation
Every Thursday from 12:00 - 12:30PM
Click the Zoom link to join [here](#), Sign up to receive a reminder [here](#).

**Eight is Enough**
Week long mindfulness retreat. Twice daily at 8:00AM and 8:00PM, 30-minute guided meditations (suitable for beginners and experienced meditators). Join for all or for some. This is for you! In lieu of an in person Caregiver Wellness Day retreat, as has been our tradition since 2012, I hope you will join me and others for this online experience and opportunity to join remotely.
Click on the Zoom link to join [here](#).

**New support group for those living with MCI or early-stage dementia**

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.

Register for Mitten Minds here

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

Soothing word of the month

Sempiternal (not comparable)
Everlasting, eternal. (philosophy) Everlasting, that is, having infinite temporal duration.

Upcoming Virtual Programs

"When it's not Alzheimer's Disease"
November 20, 11:00AM - Noon
Dr. Sami Barmada will present specifically about the many dementias outside of Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Barmada is an Associate Professor of Neurology at the University of Michigan. His research focused on the overlap between frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and ALS.

Register here for the November lecture

New Research Studies Looking for Caregivers

Exploring the Use of Weighted Blankets as a Non-Pharmacologic Intervention for Home Dwelling
Older Adults with Dementia

We are delighted to support Melissa Harris, a PhD student at the University of Michigan School of Nursing, in a new research study. Ms. Harris is seeking participants living with dementia, that live together with their family caregiver in the home setting, to complete a research study about the use of weighted blankets.

Research shows that the use of weighted blankets can reduce anxiety and stress in older adults, however there isn’t research specifically targeting older adults with dementia. Ms. Harris hopes to explore the use of weighted blankets in older adults living with dementia to see if they may be helpful in increasing the user’s relaxation and decrease stress, which might in turn help reduce some of the challenging symptoms of dementia individuals experience.

For more information, please follow the link below to see the full study overview flyer, or contact Melissa Harris at mharris@umich.edu or 405-513-1271.

More information here

WeCareAdvisor: A Web-Based Tool to Improve Quality of Life for Military Veterans with Dementia and their Caregivers (WeCareAdvisor):

This study is seeking caregivers to test the WeCareAdvisor, a web-based tool that aims to help users learn more about and manage behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia like wandering, repeated questioning, anger, depression or apathy. This study is looking for participants who have access to a computer or mobile device with internet and are also the primary in-home caregivers for a military Veteran who is living with dementia. This study does not require any in-person visits; it will be completely virtual. Contact Barbara Stanislawski at bstanisl@med.umich.edu or 734-232-0323.

Learn more about caregiver research

SUPPORT THE CENTER

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

MICHIGAN MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE CENTER

facebook
twitter
instagram
youtube