

2018

Senior Education Conference

**Taking Care
of the
Caregiver**



Presenter: Susan Clark Hardy

Chatham County Council on Aging

Human Services Team Leader and Caregiver Specialist

TOOLS FOR RELEASING STRESS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Walking in the park | Hiking | Walking at twilight or early morning |
| Having a manicure | Singing | Watching the sunrise or sunset |
| Being with children | Playing tennis | Making small house repairs |
| Sharing with a friend | Praying | Going to an outdoor market |
| Watching a movie | Painting | Taking leisurely, warm baths |
| Crying at a movie | Volunteering | Buying yourself flowers |
| Writing your story | Exercising | Getting out of town for a short time |
| Listening to favorite music | Traveling | Deep breathing for relaxation |
| Buying favorite music | Planting flowers | Trying out a new restaurant |
| Writing in a journal | Golfing | Reading something inspirational |
| Sleeping or napping | Yoga | Spending time with family |
| Watching television | Bird watching | Eating a favorite dinner by candlelight |
| Knitting or crocheting | Doing aerobics | Watching a fire in the fireplace |
| Reading a good book | Going fishing | Giving a hug (you get one back) |
| Playing the piano | Baking bread | Listening to the radio |
| Sitting in the backyard | Sewing | Trying out a new recipe |
| Cleaning the house | Dancing | Cleaning the car |
| Browsing in a bookstore | Laughing | Playing softball |
| Buying a book | Flying a kite | Doing genealogy |
| Reading a mystery | Bowling | Having a massage |
| Taking photographs | Meditating | Going to a football game |
| Going for a drive | Going hunting | Going to the symphony |
| Collecting coins | Quilting | Visiting with a neighbor |
| Playing with a pet | Playing cards | Playing an instrument in a band |
| Going to the beach | Holding a baby | Singing with a group |
| Going to the mountains | Gardening | Doing crossword puzzles |
| Buying new clothes | Building models | Talking with a trusted friend |
| Collecting antiques | Reading poetry | Playing on the computer |
| Working with clay | Writing letters | Starting an herb garden |
| Decorating a cake | Having a picnic | Saying "I can" to yourself |
| Arranging flowers | Walking the dog | Stretching your body (like a cat) |
| Browsing in a store | Shopping | Pouring out your feelings on a
tape recorder (then erasing it) |
| Visualizing a pleasant
situation | | |

MY ACTION PLAN

When writing an Action Plan, be sure it includes:

1. **What** you are going to do.
2. **How much** you are going to do.
3. **When** you are going to do it (e.g., what time of day).
4. **How often** you are going to do it.

Example: This week I will read a favorite book (*what*) for a half hour (*how much*) in the mid-afternoon when my spouse sleeps (*when*), three times—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (*how many*).

This week I will _____ [what]

_____ [how much]

_____ [when]

_____ [how often]

How confident are you that you will complete your entire Action Plan during the week?

(Circle) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
not at all **totally**
confident **confident**

Check off each day you accomplish your plan	Comments:
Monday _____	_____
Tuesday _____	_____
Wednesday _____	_____
Thursday _____	_____
Friday _____	_____
Saturday _____	_____
Sunday _____	_____

MANAGING STRESS EXERCISE

Question 1: What are one or two major sources of your stress? Write them down.

1.

2.

Question 2: Can I change anything about these stressors? If so, what can I change?

Question 3: What actions can I take to reduce or manage stress?

1.

2.

3.

Question 4:

Write an example of your negative self-talk.

Rewrite the above example as a positive statement.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Give yourself permission to take the next few minutes for yourself. For just a little while let go of all outside concerns. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Uncross your legs, ankles, arms.... Allow your body to feel completely supported by the surface beneath you.

You may want to close your eyes as a way of closing out any unnecessary distractions. Begin by taking a deep breath in, filling your chest with air.... and breathing all the way down to your abdomen.... When you're ready to breathe out, breathe slowly and completely through your mouth... As you breathe out, let the tension flow out with your breath.

Now, let all your muscles feel heavy.... And let your whole body just sink to the surface beneath you.... Good. This exercise will guide you through the major muscle groups from your feet to your head. You will be asked to first tense and then relax those muscles. If you have pain in any part of your body today, don't tense that area. Instead, just notice any tension that may already be there....and let go of that tension.

Become aware of the muscles of your feet and calves. Pull your toes back up towards your knees. Hold your feet in this position....noticing the sensations. Now, relax your feet and release the tension. Observe any changes in sensations as you let go of that tension....Good.

Now tighten the large muscles of your thighs and buttocks. Hold the muscles tense and as you do, be aware of the sensations...And now release these muscles, allowing them to feel soft as if they are melting into the surface beneath you....Good.

And, now turn your attention to your abdomen and chest. Tense these muscles by holding in your abdomen and tightening the muscles on your chest wall. Notice a tendency to hold your breath as you tense these muscles....Now release the tension. You may feel a natural desire to take a deep breath and release even more of the tension....so do that now. Breathe in deeply through your nose....and when you breathe out, allow your chest and abdomen to soften....Good.

Now, straighten your fingers straight out....and tighten the muscles of your hands and arms. Hold. And, now relax your hands and arms....and feel the tension flowing out....and the circulation returning.

Next, press your shoulder blades together, tightening the muscles in your upper back, shoulders and neck. This is a place many people carry tension....And now, relax those muscles. You may notice that your muscles feel a little warmer and more alive.

Finally, tighten all of the muscles in your face and head. Notice the tension around your eyes and in your jaw especially. And now, release the tension and relax, allowing the muscles around your eyes to soften and your mouth to remain slightly open as your jaw relaxes. Notice the difference.

Now take another deep breath in, and when you're ready to breathe out, allow any remaining tension to flow out with your breath...and your whole body to be even more deeply relaxed....

And now, just enjoy this feeling of deep relaxation for a little while. Remember this pleasant feeling....You can quiet your mind and body in this way any time you do this activity. With practice, you'll be able to create this feeling just by taking a deep breath. As you prepare to end this exercise, picture yourself bringing this feeling of quiet and calm to whatever you're going to do next. Now...take one more deep breath....and breathe out.... When you're ready, open your eyes.

(From: The Chronic Disease Self-Management Course, K. Lorig, Patient Education Research Center, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA)

GUIDED IMAGERY

It's time to relax now. For just a short time, let go of all outside concerns. In this guided imagery exercise, prepare yourself for a summertime stroll to a beach.

Make yourself as comfortable as possible in your chair... uncross your legs and ankles. Relax your arms at your side. Close your eyes as a way of closing out any unnecessary distractions.

Now imagine yourself walking barefoot down a sandy path...

In the distance you can hear the waves rumbling onto the beach. The soft sand feels slightly cool between your toes. The plants on each side of the path tickle your legs as you take this leisurely walk.

As you get closer, the sound of the waves gets louder... you can see the sun slowly beginning to set above... it is making the sky and the few clouds turn to pink and orange colors...

As you continue down the path, you can see the water now... its brilliant blue color is sparkling in the sunset... the calming ripples closest to the shore invite you to take a closer look...

As you walk towards the water... leaving footprints behind... you start to feel the soft sand become more solid under your feet... it feels a little wet from the water near the shore...

The edge of the water gleams with white foam. You notice a few sea shells in the sand... you bend over to pick up one and see its perfect shape and pearly insides...

With the warm water trickling between your toes... you look up and out across the water as far as you can see... realizing now how small we are in the vastness of the universe.

Just a few feet from the water's edge sits an empty chair... as you walk toward the chair, you can see small crabs sticking their heads out of tiny holes in the sand and running away as you draw near...

After you take a seat in the chair... you're impressed by the harmony of the surroundings... the warmth of the summer air, the sweet smell of the water, your toes in the sand, your ears listening to the sound of the waves and your eyes watching the sunset over the water... a feeling of peace cascades over you... you take a deep breath to take in more of this relaxing time.

You sit here and rest awhile... relaxed in the feeling that nothing else in the world matters at this moment... This is a time of pure enjoyment, just for you. Listen awhile and relax some more.

When you're ready... you begin to stand up... feeling the soft sand between your toes again... thankful that you've had this time to yourself... Remember... that you can return to this place in your mind's eye whenever you want to...

You begin to walk back along the sandy path that brought you to this peaceful place. You are grateful for this time of refreshment.

Take a deep, cleansing breath and then slowly exhale. When you're ready, slowly begin to open your eyes.

A Health Intervention for Caregivers in Chatham County

Benjamin Edwards

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Appendix B

Caregiver Resources Identified and Provided to the COA

AARP Resources for Caregivers

Internet address: <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/>

Description: [Internet portal for caregiver-related support materials and resources](#)

AARP Family Caregiving Video Series

Internet address: <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/initiatives/home-alone-alliance.html>

Description: Instructional video series for common caregiver skills, including wound care, mobility, and medication management. Includes English and Spanish-language versions.

Family Caregiver Alliance Caregiver College video playlist

Internet address (English-language version):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUjOarB8XUc&list=PLa1B8idpEiEplIAyH_swKvZvTQ9yAKH6t

Internet address (Spanish-language version):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOJzSokgAWY&list=PLa1B8idpEiEqwYW6o_fQYr_rvI9zpCJM9

Description: Playlist of common caregiver skills, including transfers, nutrition, dental care, bathing and dressing, toileting and incontinence care, behavioral issues, and self-care. Includes both English and Spanish-language versions.

AARP Prepare to Care Guide

Internet address: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/caregiving/2018/02/prepare-to-care-guide-english-aarp.pdf>

Description: Text-based guide for new caregivers. Topics addressed including planning, forming a team, finding support, and self-care.

USCF Orientation to Caregiving

Internet address: http://cancer.ucsf.edu/docs/crc/Caregiver_GEN-old.pdf

Description: Text-based guide for caregivers. Topics addressed include what to address as a caregiver, managing care at home, communicating about illness, paying for healthcare, and advanced care planning.