

Living Well

TOTAL WELLNESS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Caring for the Caregiver

Learn...

- To solve your wellness puzzle
- To develop action plans with professionals, family and friends
- What works for you

I think that the most stressful thing about being a caregiver is frustration. I am used to identifying problems and solving them.

Suddenly, I'm faced with a range of confusing conditions I can't understand – let alone fix.

A.S. - from a note about her mother.

Caregiving can be deeply satisfying—whether you are caring for a parent, a spouse, a friend or a child. But, for many people, it is one of the most difficult challenges of their lives.

When caregivers become stressed or exhausted, it affects their loved ones. Thus, it is very important for caregivers to take care of themselves, while helping others.



The “Planning Poem” (explained on the back of this sheet) **can help seniors, adults and teens. Use it to first help yourself.** You'll have more energy and better health. Plus, these strategies can help you avoid the “stress blindness” that keeps you from seeing what's good about yourself, others and your life.

*Start solving your puzzle. Get help when you can.
Use four ways to stop stress. Then learn from your plan.*

Peace of Mind?

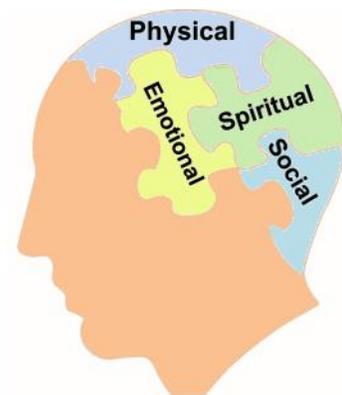
What if helping you *and* your loved one to find peace of mind, forgiveness, happiness or love was a primary goal of caregiving?

Would anything be lost? And what might be gained by addressing each piece of the Wellness Puzzle?

Might love (e.g., a sense of oneness with others) really be an important medicine? ...along with whatever is prescribed by your care team?

Get Help and Succeed

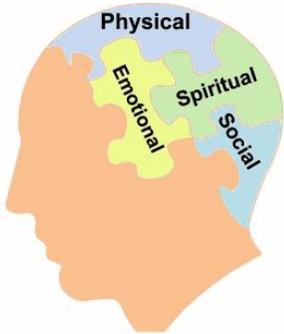
Use the *Planning to Live Well* poem on the next page to prioritize what's important, get the help you need, and succeed at your plan.



Planning to Live Well

The steps in this planning poem can help you and your loved ones to "be your best."

Start solving your puzzle. Get help when you can. Use four ways to stop stress. Then learn from your plan.



START SOLVING YOUR PUZZLE

Any piece of the wellness puzzle can help or harm the other pieces.

Which pieces of the Wellness Puzzle are most important for you? ...and for your loved one?

GET HELP WHEN YOU CAN



2-1-1 is a phone number that connects you to an information specialist who can link you to the community services (e.g., financial, emotional, medical and other help) for seniors, adults or children.

NY Connects (through the NYS Office for the Aging) connects you with resources and assistance whether you're caring for a senior, an adult or a child (1-800-342-9871 /www.NYCONNECTS.ny.gov)



If **spirituality** is important to you, think about seeking support through prayer and/or a local faith community—or review our other *Action Guides* on **Prayer** and **Finding More Love**.

USE FOUR WAYS TO STOP STRESS

Use the **Satisfaction Skills** to help you:

- improve communication between you, your loved one and your care team
- Stop your stressing (if only for a minute or an hour)
- Understand people who are different from you
- And (if spirituality is important) to pray

THEN LEARN FROM YOUR PLAN

Use our **Planning Poem** to make a plan with your doctor, family and friends ... **then learn from it!**

- **Remember your goals** (for each piece of the Wellness Puzzle)
- **and check your signs.** (e.g, blood pressure, depression)
- **Take some steps** (e.g., exercise, medications, volunteering)
- **and learn each time.** (Tell you doctor what worked, and what didn't)

Bring someone with you to each medical appointment. Share your record and questions with the doctor, and write down their advice.

Awareness

Listen
Focus

The Satisfaction Skills

Affirm
Compliment
Praise

Assert
I think...
I want...
I feel..

Accept
Relax
Forgive

Learn from Your Plan!

1. Remember Goals →

Experience more love with family
 Less stress... More peace
 More energy to enjoy friends and family

2. Check your Signs →

Stress, Moods and Behavior Social and Spiritual Satisfaction Physical Abilities or Problems

Feel disconnected - angry with others
 Strong "alarm response" each AM; Blood Pressure = 160/100
 Am breathless after climbing one flight of stairs

3. Take Some Steps →

Exercise: Weight walking/swimming Affirmations: Repeat "I'm strong" Personal Care: Hygiene, positive Acceptance: Relax, forgive
 Use "Your Resources: Emotional, Occasional Help"
 Get and Give support: Discuss with partner, friend or relative

See doctor about blood pressure control - medications?
 Practice "satisfaction skills" exercises at least twice a day
 Walk every day - do strength building every other day

Learn each time. (Doctor, caregiver, family, friend help improve your signs)

KAREN D. Partner's Name: Amy C Today's Date: 3/14 Next Discussion date: 3/21